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SYNCRETIC PRACTICES BETWEEN ART AND ARCHITECTURE: TOWARDS A CRITICAL EPISTEMIC PRACTICE FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

By

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Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* has the author been registered for any other university award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

This thesis has been proofread by a third party; no factual changes or additions or amendments to the argument were made as a result of this process. A copy of the thesis prior to proofreading will be made available to the examiners upon request.

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Syncretic practices between art and architecture. Towards a critical epistemic practice for social engagement.

Abstract.

This thesis proceeds from an analysis and a critical assessment of socially engaged spatial practices that have arisen from the convergence, intersections and conflicts between public, social art, and architecture's spatial practices; specifically, those situated within informal settlements of marginalized communities in Latin America. Through a literature review, the thesis identifies the persistence of a number of overarching misconceptions informing the design thinking of art and architecture's spatial practices.

This research is geographically framed in Latin America. The thesis develops within the contextual arena of informality as a vernacular practice in the informal settlements of marginalized communities at the borderlands of the Latin-American city. The thesis is informed by projects and interventions that artist and architects have developed and constructed within communities in these borderlands sites. The thesis contends that public and social art and architecture spatial practices in the site of poor marginalized communities perpetuate the colonizing attitudes and processes of extractivist capitalism. To substantiate this, claim the research has been informed by two case studies of art and architecture spatial practice. The projects this thesis focuses on are located in the informal settlements of La Perla in

San Juan, Puerto Rico, and in Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia. These are the sites where the impact and effect of artists' and architects' spatial practices were observed.

The content of this research results from conversations and observations within these communities, thus weaving a communal narrative of epistemic injustices, resistance, appropriation and place-making.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the decolonization of the working paradigms of art and architecture's spatial practices. It begins by outlining a methodology for identifying epistemic and hermeneutical injustices in the design thinking of artists and architects; this is followed by the proposal for a critical epistemology to guide the design thinking of art and architecture's spatial practices away from their epistemic errors.

The thesis provides a model for further practical exploration by uncovering the epistemological problems in the design thinking of artist and architects. This research speculates a design-thinking solution of a critical epistemic methodology for artists and architects to develop a socially sensible epistemology of justice and solidarity for a socio-spatial practice that promotes social engagement in marginalized and disenfranchised communities.

Contents.

List of Illustrations.

Introduction.

This introduction frames an enquiry into the function of art and architecture in today's consumer capitalist society, discussed by a number of renowned spatial practitioners and theorists (Rendell, 2006; Mouffe, 2007; Bishop, 2009; Miessen, 2010; Foster, 2011; Cruz, 2012; Van Heeswijk, 2012). The art critic Hal Foster reduced their function to *"attract business and to brand cities"* (Foster, 2011, p. vii). This enquiry arose from the sense of loss both disciplines seemed to convey in the early 90s and coalesced into an existential crisis after the global market crisis of 2008. Many artists and architects took refuge from the crisis by turning away from the bankrupted professional market-driven sites of private architecture firms, commercial galleries, academic institutions, museums, international art fairs, and biennales, and towards the site of the social. The *"social turn"* (Bishop, 2009) of both disciplines was meant to regain a social legitimacy that art and architecture practices had lost during the past decades, accused of elitism and of being reflexive practices (Awan, Schneider, and Till, 2011). In particular this turn would also allow young artists and architects to develop their professional practice portfolios before trying to enter the private professional domain of their practices. Thus, artists and architects found themselves looking to each other's disciplines for means to reinvent themselves in a new social spatial practice[1] (Chapter 4).

Architecture has always been attracted to art as a practice with subversive potential, and artists have valued architecture for its institutional credibility (Rendell,

[1] Social spatial practice comes from the combination of two separate but related terms. Spatial practice is *"a loose and expandable set of approaches that embrace the political and the activist, the performative and the curatorial, the architecture and the urban."* (Dodd, 2020).

2006). The artist's practice is deemed *"speculative"* and *"open-ended"*; architecture practice, on the other hand, has a clear and *"objective"* function. While architecture is tasked with building courthouses, schools, community centres, shopping malls, parks and many other structures of public gathering, place-making, and urban renewal, art is relegated in the way described by artist Barbara Kruger in an interview with W. J. T. Mitchell: *"if architecture is a slab of meat, then so-called public art is a piece of garnish lying next to it"* (Mitchell, 1991).

The intangibility of art's social effects and functions is often seen by governments, social institutions, and society at large as masquerading a social importance beyond art's autonomy and traditional purposes of decoration, entertainment, and pleasure. The art critic and historian Hal Foster (2002, p. 40) wrote that Freud once argued: "*the artist is the only figure allowed to be freely expressive in the first place, the only one exempted from many of the instinctual renunciations that the rest of us undergo as a matter of course"* (Freud, 1911). In contrast, the architect is seldom given the opportunity to have no function (Rendell, 2006). Therefore, to break away from these sets of traditional constraints, and the stigma of their own disciplines, artists and architects have been borrowing, appropriating, absorbing and processing methods, behaviours, techniques and actions from each other's practices. The result has been a syncretic practice whereby art gains structure from architecture and architecture in turn gains informality from art. Furthermore, both disciplines have understood their social turn to be concomitant to spatial questions of justice, segregation, expulsion and informal urbanization. The urban theorist Edward W. Soja called the attention from many social disciplines towards these spatial questions the *"spatial turn"* (Soja, 2010). The syncretic practices between art

and architecture become instrumentalized in the nexus of the socio-spatial dialectics (Soja, 1989) between epistemologies of power and the social spatial site of the artist and architect's practice.

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This thesis explores the conjunctions created between art and architecture's syncretic processes and the socio-spatial practices generated with their interventions in the site of the social. Hal Foster has referred to these intersections as the *art-architecture complex*. This ominous title refers more to the large-scale architecture and public art projects funded by private and government institutions. Another perspective belongs to the architectural historian and critic Jane Rendell, who theorized *"architecture's curiosity about contemporary art"* (Rendell, 2006, p. 3) into a new practice that she named *critical spatial practice.* She argued that this practice *"allows us to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages with both the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private"* (Rendell, 2006). However, this research investigated socially engaged spatial practices[2] that have coalesced from the syncretic relations between public,

[2] Socially engaged art is the most recent term to be used in art criticism to refer to the artwork that is created to involve the social interaction of the public and community. *"Socially engaged practice, also referred to as social practice or socially engaged art, can include any art form that involves people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction"* (Tate Art Terms, 2020).
Other names have previously been used to describe similar social works and initiatives that engaged the public into the system of the artwork: maintenance art (Mierle Lademan Ukeles, 1969), social sculpture (Joseph Beuys, 1970s), relational aesthetics (Nicolas Burriaud, 1998), new genre art (Suzanne Lacy, 1995), dialogical art (Bruce Barber, 2000s), experimental geography (Trevor Paglen, 2002), littoral art (Grant H. Kester, 2004), social collaboration and socially co-operative art (Claire Bishop, 2006).

social art, and social architecture[3] practices – specifically those situated within the socio-political sites of poor marginalized communities in Latin America (Chapter 3).

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The word *practice* denotes a very specific and disciplinary way of looking and working in the world. The colloquial sense of practice portrays a limited instrumental connotation; an image of a very specialized and repetitive timeless activity that has been perfected over time and tradition. Practice is thought of as the skill, or tacit knowledge and presuppositions, which underpin activities and actions without reflection. (Turner, 1994; Dreyfus, 1991). A recurrent disciplined action, towards the perfecting – *mastering* a specific goal. The value of a practice is contextualized within an epistemic hierarchy of a legitimizing agency. This agency is usually manifested in the forms of tradition, culture and its *sedimented culturalized values*[4]*.* This instrumentalized view of practice does not reveal any epistemic curiosity, nor any creative intentionality towards transformative new knowledge; instead it is construed only by the mastering of *techne* over *episteme*. In contrast, art practice is presented as speculative, experimental and open-ended (Ingold, 2013).

This thesis posits the idea for a *critical epistemic practice* as a liberating informed *socio-spatial practice* for breaking with the hierarchical relations of the *"politics of*

[3] Social architecture is by design the instrumentation of space to procure a particular socially designed behaviour response. In my use of this term, the social relates more towards the architectural design that aims to disrupt socially ingrained heteronormative and patriarchal behaviour of social hierarchies, class hegemonies and somatic norms. The "social" in art and architecture refers in this case to the promotion of relationships of solidarity and community-building, and the effects on and between peoples.

[4] S*edimented culturalized values* refers to "the way things are done here". A defensive regimented posture of "local values" as timeless national truths, to be defended, cherished and maintained as symbols of "local" national identity.

interpretation" (Said, 1982) embedded in the traditional structure of art and architecture's practice. Socio-spatial practices are social approaches to practice founded and guided by the socio-spatial dialectics (Soja, 1989) in the political structuring of liveable space (Dodd, 2020). Edward W. Soja (2010) defined critical thinking as driven *"by strategic optimism and expectation, by a goal of making theoretical and practical-political sense of the world so that we can act more appropriately and effectively"* (Soja, 2010, p. 199). A critical epistemic practice aims to create a socio-politically informed and decolonized context for artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices.

The relation between the socially engaged artist and architect lies in their mutual recognition that the intertwined social and spatial processes that reproduce oppressive and unjust relations between people have transformed their traditional practices. As Edward Soja mentioned, "*the recognition of a new spatial consciousness"* is the first step towards a critical spatial perspective. This thesis argues that such a step will allow artists and architects working in marginalized communities in Latin America as socio-spatial agents[5] to develop a socially sensible epistemology of justice and solidarity in their socio-spatial practices.

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The thesis argues that artist and architects have situated their socio-spatial practices in the informal settlements of poor marginalized communities in Latin

[5] Socio-spatial agents: for the purposes of this thesis, this term will be used to identify the particular kind of artists and architects who have chosen to intervene and work in marginalized communities in Latin America as site for their socio-spatial practices. Also see section 3.1.1. The socio-spatial agent.

America. The reason that artist and architects – especially those from Western developed cities, but also national artist and architects – have been driven from the urban centre to these sites is the diminishing public accessibility to tightly regulated use of space in the city. This lack of working space has prompted Western artists and architects from developed countries to explore the openness of informality in the poor marginalized settlements at the fringes of the Latin American city. The thesis argues that a prevailing colonialist design thinking guiding the development of artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices, projects and interventions in the sites of the marginalized community ended up reproducing the same extractivist strategies of colonizing capitalism.

The thesis presents the locus of this problem in a series of cognitive gaps and errors in the artists and architects' design-thinking methodology as socio-spatial agents.

1-The implementation gap.

There is a cognitive gap between how artists and architects describe their purposes and the function of their socio-spatial practices in the social realm of marginalized communities; and in how these practices are publicized in the rhetorical public discourse of museum exhibitions, reviews and catalogues. Art and architecture socio-spatial interventions are publicly characterized as de facto social "good", without a clear understanding of what the actual results are for the communities where these practices took place (Chapter 1).

2-Political blindness and epistemic ignorance.

The artist and architect's prejudicial perspective about the community often affects their design thinking, aims, and the purpose of their work in the field of marginalized communities. Their epistemic ignorance of "white"[6] privilege supersedes the need to know the local social and political conditions. This causes political and social blind spots in the artists' and architects' role as agents of epistemic and technical authority (Chapter 5).

3. The experience error.

The artists' and architects' social perspective is construed by the "experience error" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) of their limited experience, centred on their own everyday life. Their limited life experience coalesces into epistemic errors in their social practice: the assumption of community, the presumption of the need for help, and in the purpose of the forum of art and architecture publicity (Chapter 6).

The thesis posits the question, what does a decolonized paradigm of socio-spatially engaged art and architecture practice look like?

The thesis proposes a methodology for a critical epistemic practice to counteract the traditional patriarchal design thinking that reproduces epistemic and hermeneutical injustices.

This critical epistemic methodology starts with a critical reflection upon artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices with an intersectional contestation of its political, ethical and aesthetic values. Before assembling methods, experiences, and designs

[6] White and whiteness are defined in this thesis not as skin colour but instead as performative social categories of power and epistemic authority (Castro-Gomez, 2014; Segato, 2018b).

from social and public art, social architecture, critical spatial practices[7], and decolonial feminism to forge a functional set of operations, tactics and a critical decolonial[8] and epistemological perspective (Chapter 7).

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Summary. The next section of this introduction summarises the content of each chapter.

Chapter 1. Research methodology.

This research takes a critical view at the practices that guide the traditional art and architecture's socio-spatial design practices. Following a self-reflexive and grounded theory with a critical analysis together with on-the-field experiences of many works of socio-spatial practice, the research presents a critical epistemic methodology and a speculative hypothesis to solve the methodological gaps in

[7] Jane Rendell introduced the term "critical spatial practice" in her article "A Place between Art, Architecture and Critical Theory", *Proceedings to Place and* and later consolidated and developed the concept in her book *Art and Architecture.*
"I suggest a new term, 'critical spatial practice', which allows us to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages with both the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private. This term draws attention not only to the importance of the critical, but also to the spatial, indicating the interest in exploring the specifically spatial aspects of interdisciplinary processes or practices that operate between art and architecture.'" (Rendell, 2006).

For a further discussion of critical spatial practice in art and architecture see:
Miassen, M. (2016). *Crossbenching, Toward participation as Critical Spatial Practice*. Sternberg Press, London.

[8] Decolonial thought challenges the matrix of colonial power, which perpetuates domination through totalizing forms of knowledge under global capitalism (Quijano, 2000). From different perspectives, black feminism, queer theory, indigenous universities and various other movements and practices open cross-disciplinary spaces beyond global epistemic hierarchies, mobilizing subaltern identities and geopolitical spaces to generate multiple varieties of situated knowledge that embodies other forms of imagination, action and being in the world (Grosfoguel, 2002).

socio-spatial art and architecture's practices, decolonize traditional patriarchal pedagogy design thinking and ways to measure the success of socio-spatial practices.

Chapter 2. Case Studies.

This thesis has been informed by visits to two successful projects of social practice. The first project, *La Perla Bowl* (2006) by the artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo, is located in the neighbourhood of La Perla in San Juan, Puerto Rico. *La Perla Bowl* was built as an artist intervention in the form of a skate bowl/community pool. The second project, *El Potocine* (2016), was designed by the architecture collective Arquitectura Expandida and is situated in the neighbourhood of Potocí in Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia. *El Potocine* is a self-managed non-profit movie theatre. It was built co-operatively between the community organization Ojo al Sancocho and the members of Arquitectura Expandida. Both projects remain in use, and are maintained by the community. During my visits to the sites, many informal conversations took place with the artist and architects, and with the community organizers, residents of the neighbourhood, and visitors. It is from these conversations, and from the observations during the visits, that some key ideas arose for the development of a critical epistemic practice. These informal conversations have informed the beginning of the methodological approach for the thesis elaborated on in chapter 2 in the case studies.

During conversations with the members of Arquitectura Expandida, two other projects came to attention as examples of failed social intervention by artists and

architects into marginalized communities. The project *Escalera como Prótesis* (2013) created in La Perla, Puerto Rico was poorly planned and ended up being neglected by the community and later eroding into the sea. The second project, La Casa del Viento (2010), built in San Cristobal, Bogotá became the centre of a communal dispute and was burned down. These two projects served to illustrate the epistemic ignorance of artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices. When artists and architects intervene in communities without the necessary local knowledge, sensitivity, and openness to other voices beyond their own, their projects become parachuting practices and the artists' and architects' social function becomes the colonizing agent (Chapter 4).

Chapter 3. Framing the problem.

This chapter explores the socio-spatial relationships that frame the sites of contention where art and architecture's socio-spatial practices are nowadays entangled. Starting with a discussion on the marginalized as the site of practice for artists and architects and the issues that start to contextualize marginality within the framework of habitable space in the modern city. The chapter follows with a series of definitions that elucidate the research's thinking from an intersectional and decolonial perspective. The chapter ends presenting the methodological gaps in art and architecture's social practices and proposing a speculative hypothesis to be explored throughout the thesis,

Chapter 4. A crisis in art and architecture.

This chapter highlights the social conditions that have contributed to the crisis in social legitimacy of art and architecture practice. It also shows how art and architecture's practices reaction undertook a "social turn" (Thompson, 2004; Bishop, 2006) towards a socially conscious, participatory and collaborative design thinking in their individual professional practices. The chapter continues with an analysis on the commodification of art and architecture's practices, as catalysts to the legitimacy crisis. The chapter closes with an overview of culture as the site of legitimization, and culturalism as the ontology of a recursive patriarchal design practice that has perpetuated the short-sighted social perspective of artist and architects.

Chapter 5. The site and its marginalization.

This chapter defines the informal settlements of poor migrants in the borderlands of the modern Latin American city as the site where artists and architects are implementing their socio-spatial practices. The site of practice is analysed from a socio-political economy of its main components: the city, the community, and the marginalized. The demystification of the romantic image of imagined community and the construction of the abject poor migrants as the marginalized are key elements on the critical deconstruction of the socio-spatial terrain of the site. The chapter presents the social tectonics of the site intertwined with prejudices towards the marginalized population. Their informal economy and dwellings are categorized as a *monstrous* threat to metropolitan society; while their vernacular behaviour of *viveza* is chastised as a form of resistance and a form of selfish individualism.

Chapter 6. The syncretic practice.

This chapter explores a critical deconstruction of artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices in the site of marginalized communities. The thesis posits that the methods and design thinking by which artists and architects intervene with their practices in the site of marginalized communities have arisen from a syncretic relationship between art and architecture's theory and praxis. The syncretism between art and architecture inherited traditional disciplinary practices of authoritarian patriarchal design thinking from Western academic thought. The chapter analyses what these traditional authoritarian practices are and how they have been detrimental in the artists' and architects' development of their socio-spatial practices. The thesis posits that these practices create a baleful relationship of colonialism between the artist/architect and the people who inhabit the site. This in turn creates epistemic errors that are carried throughout the practice into misguided and prejudicial definitions of the public, participation and the socio-spatial function of practice.

Chapter 7. Towards a critical epistemic practice for art and architecture.

This chapter presents a theoretical framework for the development of a critical epistemic practice for art and architecture. The thesis posits that such a practice would bridge the methodological and cognitive gaps in the traditional social and participatory practices that have proven to be ineffective, unjust and prejudicial in the site of marginalized communities. The process towards a critical epistemic practice starts with an introspective critical contestation of the artists' and architects' ethics, aesthetic values, and epistemic ignorance. This process would coalesce into a socially sensible practice of solidarity and epistemic resistance for the community.

Chapter 8. Conclusions.

This chapter closes the thesis with a summary of the theoretical narrative of the development of a *critical epistemic practice* for a decolonized paradigm of socio-spatially engaged art and architecture practice, followed by a critical reflection on the thesis, the limitations of the research, and possibilities for further research.

The thesis contribution to knowledge radiates beyond the instrumentation of a *critical epistemic practice* for decolonizing the individual working paradigm of artists and architects socio-spatial interventions. Through these processes the artist and the architect can liberate themselves from traditional misguided patriarchal design methodologies. This research is a theoretical foundation for a decolonizing pedagogy in design thinking and art making and more crucially, for the overall formation of the artist and architect's social perspective.

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Chapter 1. Research methodology.

This research takes a critical view at the gamut of sedimented practices that guide the traditional design practices of artists and architects when working in the social realm of marginalized poor populations living in informal settlements. Sedimented practices are ways of doing things, guided by uncritical knowledge taken for granted as ever-existing norms and behaviours. These practices constitute the framework of influences and structure of ethical and moral judgments that shape our everyday behaviour. These are evident in the patriarchal-centred tradition of design pedagogy of art and architecture disciplines. Arturo Escobar argued the "cultural-philosophical armature from which design practice itself emerges (broadly patriarchal capitalist modernity)." (Escobar, 2018; 3) need to be questioned. The tradition of patriarchal pedagogy is founded on the certitude of Western patriarchal culture's epistemic superiority. Its practices are guided by sedimented beliefs constructed to corroborate Western society's knowledge, ethics, and morals as guiding universal ideals to be followed by the rest of the world. Patriarchal pedagogy positions the white heterosexual Western male as the locus of epistemic authority (Puwar, 2004; Segato, 2018). Western science biologized race and gender into inferior epistemic categories (Shiva, 1999; Quijano, 2000), thus fabricating the power asymmetries that would constitute modern society (Loomba, 1998; Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1993). Hence, traditional patriarchal design pedagogy reproduces the epistemic asymmetries between race, gender, class and sexuality into an extractivist practice (Gago and Medrazza, 2017; Gómez-Barris, 2017), where knowledge from other voices is silenced as these voices become assimilated into Western academic's official design practice discourse. At this particular point in

western academic thought, Lucy Lippard wrote “art can seem insignificant compared with the perils offered by life.” (Lippard, 2014). Artists and architects need to outline new trajectories for ‘thinking otherwise’. (Petrescu, 2007; Escobar, 2018).

Western art and architecture dogma have been accused of epistemic righteousness, paternal colonialist attitudes of hermeneutical ignorance, and cognitive blindness in disregard to the actual social and political conditions of the *“other”* – the subjects of colonization, who are the audience and users of the social practices that artist and architects produce. (Gómez-Barris, 2017; Dornhof et al, 2018; Davila, 2020).

Art and architecture as disciplines have been the beacon of Western aesthetic and epistemic authority over the colonized Global South[9]. Globalized consumer capitalism has made Western art and architecture discourse and pedagogy the golden standard for true artistic knowledge and beauty. As capitalism’s incessant march over the globe engulfed the earth, so did its prime concepts of universal cognition: desire, freedom and happiness. The promises of universal capitalism reside on homogenizing aesthetics of fashion, art and architecture. Their social attributes and political services accompanied the levelling landscape of culture as the site for a universal menu of apparent choices for the new individualized persona of globalized consumer capitalism. Conformity by consumption of the appropriate

[9] This thesis utilizes the term Global South to refer to the so-called “third world” of underdeveloped nations and territories.

combinations of *items of social recognition*[10] as the apparatus for manufacture and social camouflage for personal identity and pseudo-choice are the social norm of this individualized persona.

In this global consumer capitalism's paradigm of individualization by consumption, art and architecture had fallen behind in their ingenuity and creative ethos. Publicity and fashion had become the reigning influential epistemologies of capitalism in the 21st century.

In order to contextualize this thesis's critique of arts and architecture's socio-spatial practices and pedagogy, this research proposes the following principal questions:

> 1-What are the cognitive gaps present in the design thinking and practices of many artists and architects working as socio-spatial agents in marginalized communities?
>
> 2-Why does a number of socio-spatial projects in marginalized communities tend to reproduce capitalism's colonizing extractivist practices?
>
> 3- What are the reasons behind the success and failure of socio-spatial projects?

The thesis developed through a critical reading and use of the literature, projects, interventions, and artefacts of public and socially engaged art and architecture, together with the analysis of the two case studies. The answers to the questions informed the development of a methodology for a *critical epistemic practice* to

[10] The production of objects, behaviours and events directed by the social economy of fashion to distinguish class affiliation and social-capital influence define the items of social recognition.

serve as a point of departure for a socially sensible, and just practice of solidarity for art and architecture socio-spatial practices in the site of marginalized communities.

Following a critical grounded theory research together with on-the-field experiences of many works (through informal interviews and case studies methods of research) of socio-spatial practice, the objectives of the research emerged:

1- To influence the design thinking of the socio-spatial agent (artists and architects) away from academic patriarchal design thinking and practices.

2- To contribute to decolonize the working paradigms of art and architecture socio-spatial practices.

3- To propose a critical epistemic practice of solidarity and a sensible, socially responsible socio-spatial practice in art and architecture.

Starting with a critical review of the social assemblages (Dovey, 2010) that are the site, the audience/user and the forum of museums, galleries, biennials and academic institutions that legitimize art and architecture practices as crucial cultural and social needs. This research utilizes decolonial feminist theory as a constitutive part in the formation of a critical epistemic practice that engages with the social function of socio-spatial art and architecture practices. The research uses *intersectionality* (Crenshaw,1981) as a theoretical framework to represent social heterogeneity as an assemblage of interactions of multiple categories of social difference: race, class, gender, etc.(Vogel, 2018). The thesis follows an intersectional approach to inquiry into the socio-political economy of the site of

marginalized communities in Latin America (Gago, 2017). Also, an intersectional perspective is followed into deconstructing the authoritarian patriarchal heteronormative and racialized condition of the artist and architect as agents of epistemic authority (Puwar, 2004; Fricker,2017 Lugones, 2010; Medina, 2013; Segato, 2018b; Valencia, 2018).

The field of decolonial feminist theory and socio-spatial practice is virtually unknown in fine-arts pedagogy and was until very recently seldom referred in its practices. Therefore, it is not surprising that most arts-based research methodologies overlook socio-spatial aspects of transdisciplinary processes and practices that operate between art and architecture. Furthermore, as Jane Rendell points out, arts-based research methodologies lack the theoretical background necessary to *"allow us to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages both the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private"* (Rendell, 2006). The critical and cunning insights of decolonial feminist theory and social practices are a necessary theoretical framework for understanding and resisting the contemporary models that globalized consumer capitalism relies on.

The intent of the thesis is to promote critical thinking of the artist and architect's practice. First, by questioning the universal values of our own Western art and architecture education; and second by critically deconstructing these universal values that have guided traditional artist and architects design practices.

The site of this research is centred on the marginal informal settlements, so-called land invasions by government agencies. These are the sites that have attracted the attention of artists and architects in their own personal and professional quests. Artists and architects all aspire to do some good for mankind. To leave a mark in

society – hopefully by improving the lives of people who have been less privileged than them. This is why the sites of the disfranchised poor, the abject of society, are the places that attract artist and architects.

In the social and political infrastructures of these sites – the *"pueblos jovenes"* (young towns), *"barriadas"* (shanty towns), and *"asentamientos humanos"* (the human settlements, or land invasions) of informal settlements – the regulatory formalities of the state are little to non-existent (Varlet, 2013; Yúdice, 1991; Roy, 2005). The absence of the state has left these sites to be self-managed in an array of informal operations, from the provisions of water, power, sewage and education to new enclosures of informal economies (Gago, 2017; Federici, 2019). The informality of these sites is very attractive to artists and architects as they can take advantage of the structural informality for developing their own projects with very little to none of the bureaucracy and oversight that these projects would be subjected to if done in other localities. In the case of the projects that this research studied, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and in Bogotá, Colombia, the informality of these two communities provided the artists and architects with the freedom to develop their projects without being thwarted by zoning laws and the array of regulatory oversight by governmental institutions.

In order to work within marginalized and disenfranchised communities in Latin America, it is paramount to understand the instrumental agency that genderized and racialized processes of bureaucracy and institutionalized segregation, racism and violence have in the everyday life of the people that inhabit these sites. Beyond the traditional Marxist short-sighted divisions of society into class and labour, the works of Edward Said (1993), Franz Fanon (1963), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

(2012), Homi Bhabha (1990,1994), Anibal Quijano (2000), Rita Segato (2018a), Veronica Gago (2017), Maria Lugones (2010), Sayak Valencia (2018), Nirmal Puwar (2004), José Medina (2013) and Miranda Fricker (2010) are very important key thinkers for understanding the present situation of these social, political and cultural asymmetric relationships of power.

The other perspective that this research critically analysed was the amalgam of artworks, interventions, architectures, workshops and the like that many artists, architects, and activists have done in the past years in sites of marginalized and disfranchised communities. These works have informed this research with their failures and successes for the development of a methodology for what a critical epistemic practice can do for community building when synthesizing the complementary fields of socially engaged art and architecture, and decolonial theory.

Many artists and architects launched their professional careers on the back of the publicity that their works gained because of the site of poor marginalized communities.

The following projects have informed the research into socially engaged spatial practices: *Tiza* (1999–2003) in Lima, Perú (Fig.1), and *Land Mark* (footprints) (Fig.2*)*, *"Under Discussion"* (2005), and *Returning a Sound* (2004) in Vieques, Puerto Rico, by artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla. Whose socio-spatial practices have achieved international recognition as well as having been criticized as socio-political opportunism in Puerto Rico and Peru.

When Faith Moves Mountains (2002) outside Lima, Perú, by Francis Alÿs (Fig.3 & 4). *Hotel Fuentes De Hebro* (1997) by artists Lara Almarcegui and Bergoña Movellan. *Residuos Urbanos Solidos* (Urban Solid Waste) (2008) by the architecture collective Basurama. *Immigrant Movement International* (2011) by artist Tania Bruguera. *Revival Field* (1991–ongoing) by artist Mel Chin. *Casa Rompecabezas* (Puzzle House) (2002–2004) by architect Santiago Cirugeda. *Museo de la Calle* (1999) by the Cambalache Collective (Carolina Caycedo, Adriana Garcia, Alonso Gil, and Federico Guzman). *The School of Panamerican Unrest* (2003–2006) by artist Pablo Helguera. *Proyecto Casa Comedor San Martin* (2007–present) in Lima, Perú, by the social-architecture collective Fitekantropus. These have been examples of well intentioned socio-spatial practices of artists. Nevertheless these works informed the research in what is latter developed as the artists and architects' cognitive gaps and epistemic errors in chapter 6.

Escalera como Protesis (Stairs as Prosthesis) (2013) (Fig.5) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and *La Casa del Viento* (House of Wind) (2010) (Fig.6), San Cristobal, Bogotá, Colombia by architecture collective Arquitecture Expandida. Where chosen as examples of fail architectural interventions, which illustrated the cognitive gaps and epistemic errors of socio-spatial practices.

La Perla Bowl (2006) (Fig.7) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, by artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo and Boly Cortés, and *El Potocine* (2013–present) (Fig.8) in Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia, by Ojo al Sancocho and the architecture collective Arquitecture Expandida were chosen as the case studies to inform this research because both have remained for many years in continuous use by the community. *La Perla Bowl* was a project built by an artist, and *El Potocine* was a project built by an

architecture collective in co-operation with a community organization. The ways in which these projects came to be designed and constructed revealed practices from both sides of a syncretic practice between art and architecture that this thesis posits as a methodology assembled between these two disciplines to reinvent their practices since art and architecture took the “social turn” (Bishop, 2006; Bourriaud, 2002; Thompson, 2012) into the site of marginalized communities in the early 90s. In these two projects the artists’ and architects’ unique perspectives can be seen working in tandem with the communities’ vision. This makes these two projects unique cases where the necessary characteristics for what this thesis posits as a socially sensible socio-spatial practice of solidarity with the community can be seen in practice.

Figure 1. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla. *Tiza* (1999–2003). Lima, Perú.

Figure 2. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla. *Land Mark* (footprints) (2001–2004). Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Figure 3. Francis Alÿs. *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002). Outside Lima, Perú.

Figure 4. Francis Alÿs. *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002). Outside Lima, Perú.

Figure 5. Arquitecture Expandida. *Escalera como Protesis* (Stairs as Prosthesis) (2013). La Perla, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Figure 6. Arquitecture Expandida. *La Casa del Viento* (House of Wind) (2010). Community Library, San Cristobal, Bogotá, Colombia.

Figure 7. Chemi Rosado-Seigo and Boly Cortés. *La Perla Bowl* (2006). La Perla, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Figure 8. *El Potocine* (April 17, 2018). Potocí barrio, Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia.

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1.1. The methodological gap.

Stanley Cohen argued in 1985 *"words are real sources of power for guiding and justifying policy changes and for insulating the system from criticism"*. Here, he was talking about community control and the rhetorical quest for community. But his point on the importance of the words that are used to define, in this case policy parameters, are as important or even more than the actual social acts performed according to these same words. What this means is that there will always be a cognitive gap between things described by words and the thing acted upon, described by experience. This is what he called *"the 'implementation gap' between rhetoric and reality, it is the rhetoric itself which becomes the problem"* (Cohen, 1985, p. 115).

The rhetoric implied in this case refers to the usual socio-spatial practices of art and architecture when it comes to describe their purposes and function when dealing with works done in public and in the social realm of marginalized populations. As it is the case of the socially engaged art and architectural practices where their museum exhibitions, reviews and catalogues are full of the rhetoric of *"the social"* as the site where art and architecture do good.

Language is like history in that both are determined and narrated by the reigning power and act as a tool to conserve and protect their hegemony. Thus, cognitive gaps are created in the interstices left on translation and the interpretation between the communication dialectics between subjected groups. All social groups create their own *linguistic codes* (Bernstein, 1960). From upper to lower classes, all

develop some form of exclusionary linguistic codes to restrict and protect their own social relations. Hence, in the realm of social art and architecture practices the first hurdle to overcome is language. That is why it is of great importance that we are working within the same definitions. I would return to specifically define a set of necessary terms for the acting upon the social arena.(see section. 3.1.Definitions.)

Two of the most noted blind spots caused by cognitive gaps between artists and architects working on the field of marginalized communities, and thus affecting any social design methodology for their works, are *political blindness* and the claim of *epistemic ignorance.*

Political blindness is not something new in art and architecture. Although art has had at times a fashionably radical political avant-garde in challenge to the political status quo, most of the time art and architecture end up as the publicity and propaganda services of the agreed politics of the state; and both produce works to legitimize the political and social visions of the state and its nationalisms.

As in politics, the ideal of truth and rightfulness has been equally elusive to grasp in the social practices of art and architecture. We all want to aspire to be *“the good guy”*. The selfless individual that goes against the grain of the normative individualization and commodification of a life of convenience, the anti-consumerism capitalist persona that renounces her privilege and gives herself whole to the community. There is always the elusive notion of *truth of purpose* that chases all artist and architects in the question of their intent, when working in marginalized communities.

Epistemic ignorance goes together with the claim of political blindness. They are both rhetorical stances where the author claims not to have known beforehand the history, politics, social circumstances, etc., of the field, and thus claim unwitting ignorance of the situation and hence unaccountability and guilt-free release. (Medina, 2013; Fricker, 2007)

Ignorance and blindness in the context of epistemology are not to be taken in the context of a search for truth, as truth is such a relative concept. The search for truth becomes a forensic endeavour.

Eyal Weizman posits that forensics is the practice on which people rely for the articulation and legitimization of "*the contemporary notions of public truth"* (Weizman, 2014). *"Public truth"* is in itself a cognitive mélange full of hermeneutical and epistemic traps (Fricker, 2007). A white unicorn hidden in a vast fantasy forest of democracy.

Weizman continues to present that in forensics the *"interrogation"* in search for *"a truth"* is between *"two constitute sites of forensics"*, one being *fields* and the other *forums*. For the purposes of this research this determination between these *two constitute sites* is of value, as this research's intentions are to identify the ways by which the practices of socially engaged art and architecture have had positive effects and where and how have they failed in their purpose on the site of marginalized and disfranchised communities.

A forensics overview of socially engaged practice must be taken in detail on the *field* and *forum*. For this account the *field* is the social and geographic site, where these art and architecture interventions have taken place. The *field* in Bourdieu's

sense (Bourdieu,1977) is not a neutral ground; on the contrary it is *a dynamic and elastic territory*, a highly politicized and historically fractured terrain. Socially and politically, a historical understanding of the interactions on the *field* is of key importance for the understanding of the social dynamics on the site. Because the *field* is not only a place of occurrence for these interactions; the field shapes these interactions, as a social and political site of confrontation. Based upon these understandings, a more complete perspective of the social and political landscape of the *field* could be gained by the socio-spatial agents (artists and architects) who are performing a practice upon these sites. Hence avoiding the cognitive gaps represented by the epistemic ignorance and political blindness portrayed by such socio-spatial agents in many of their intervention and works.

> *"One primary site of artistic intervention today is the gap itself that has been produced between cultural institutions and the public"* (Cruz, 2012, p. 11).

What or where are the methodological gaps in the design thinking of the practices of socially engaged art and architecture? By identifying such gaps, and a critical understanding of their ontological causes, it is possible to develop a counter-hegemonic design and social practice for socially engaged spatial art and architecture projects that do not reproduce socio-economic and political stratification and disenfranchisement.

The methodological gap lies in the hermeneutical gap left open by the plasticity of the words and the "experience error" in the socio-spatial agents' perspective. Other methodological gaps appear in the social practice of artists and architects as epistemic errors in regard to the site of the community: the assumption of

community, the presumption of the need for help, and in the forum of art and architecture publicity. These epistemic errors are discussed in Chapter 6.

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1.2. Measuring success.

A critical assessment of any project needs a prior clear definition of what success means in terms of the project and in terms of the institutions that legitimize art and architecture as valuable social and cultural practices.

Such validations change from different places and cultures. Although the globalized hegemony of Euro-American universal values has been unquestionably imposed on the aesthetics and purposes of art and architecture practices worldwide, the universalism of value caveats the critical understanding of new inchoate socio-spatial practices worldwide. To measure successful projects that this research has investigated it has been necessary to define what success means in terms of the particular social conditions of each project. A universal definition of success for socially engaged spatial art and architecture projects simplifies the specificity of place and reduces the whole social experience of the project to that of a site.

Success, in terms of what it means for the institution of the international art world[11] and culture industry, is particularly collusive. Success is a relational definition,

[11] Howard S. Becker argued: *"I have used the term [art world] in a more technical way, to denote the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that the art world is noted for"* (Becker, 1982, p. x). The art world comprises the networked conglomerate of worldwide art institutions: museums, biennials, art fairs, galleries, universities, academies, publications, and private individuals that legitimate and speculate with the value system of the work of art as an international market commodity.

because its meaning is shaped by the context from which this term is represented. In short terms, the question can be posed: Success is according to whom and for whom?

Success according to the international art world comes with dialectical frictions between what the definition of success is within the institutional legitimized social definitions versus the vanguard of a pseudo avant-garde of contemporary art practices, especially when it comes to the socially engaged art definition. These currents are being named here as pseudo avant-garde, because only initially they appear to be insurgent practices as they appear – again – to be practices of interruption of the status-quo of the art-world institutions that legitimized what is good art and what is bad art. Thus, characterizing a particular aesthetic as what is success and what is not. Surely this legitimization by the institutionalized art world is shaped also by market forces and not only by the hegemony of taste, and the aesthetic value of the bourgeois. It is another dialectical context between commodity fetishization of the artwork versus pure aesthetic value that contributes to the shaping of what is the proper social and economic context for the proper value of the artwork.

Aesthetic value understood as another dialectical construction that is shaped between the tensions of economic standing and class status. The back and forth of what is the primacy of value in the case of the art object; if it is first a commodity value or a class value.

The issue at point will be to design a methodology for a critical epistemic practice to counteract the traditional practices that perpetuate epistemic and hermeneutical

injustices that plague the design thinking of socio-spatial art and architecture projects.

Art and architecture share and dissent on many issues regarding their own research methods, creative processes, and social practices and their perceived social and individual purpose and responsibilities. At times these differences seem contrary and even antagonistic. Nevertheless, both share a common ancestry as they developed simultaneously in many cultures around the earth, not as distinct disciplines but as one and the same. The modern academic differentiation and professionalization into separate specialized disciplines has had the detrimental effect of fomenting closed, authoritative and individualized approaches when working in the social realm; the way in which art and architecture approach projects that deal directly with people, communities and social-political life. This has been their methodological gap; the modus operandi of art and architecture as hegemonic self-reflective practices. A socially detached form of practice restricted to only what the artist and architect experiences from their own privileged partial perspective (Haraway, 1988) as their own everyday life experience. This detachment from other perspectives of life has created a narcissistic and myopic design process in both art and architecture. It perpetuated and legitimized the aesthetics of class hierarchies and of taste cultures (Gans,1974).

A more effective social practice can be formed from an assemblage of the distinct modes of operation from art and architecture together with social activism and community-building approaches to space and place-making. Using and adapting aspects of decolonial feminist theory and practices of resistance (Segato, 2018; Lugones, 2010; Gago, 2017; Creshaw, 1991), transgressive informal and vernacular

architecture and an attitude of contrapuntal reading (Said,1992) of urban design, a proper transdisciplinary perspective can be developed.

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1.3. Research methods.

The research follows a qualitative social constructivist perspective with informal and flexible approach to interviews, open conversations and free dialogues with community members and artists and architects. In this process the researcher considers the diversity of local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views, voices and actions. (Creswell, 2009).

The methodology includes a mix-methods approach, including information gathering, a learning approach to the multiplicity of voices from theory and participants, grounded theory and critical analysis, multiple visits to sites of socially engaged projects and two case studies, where direct critical observations[12] were conducted and informal conversations with artists, architects and people who live around the sites took place.

The meta-narrative of the research is inescapably framed within self-reflexive contingent experiences of the researcher as artist, architect and author. The voice and positioning of the author is clearly identified in section1.5. Author's position.

[12] Critical observations are bounded by historical references. They constitute a source of informed experience and knowledge, beyond merely being empirical observations, which only reflect to the observer's limited experience of the context of the act observed.

Nevertheless, within the cognitive frame between the agency of the researcher and the subject being researched, there will always be the uncertainty of "Unknown unknowns" (Luft and Ingham, 1955). What this proposition means is that it will always be risks included in any social situation were the unexpected could not be considered or foreseen.

The uncertainty revealed in this process arrives from the context of research the author believes following Frederik Steier's (1991) account on his own research methods, "in my research is in no way existent apart from my involvement in it –it is not out there". (Steier, 1991, p. 1). Also, Steier emphasized that the research has the potential to "reveal an existent universe that might be known apart from my knowing activity and its entailments." (Steier, ibid.).

1.3.1. Self-reflexivity approach.

Reflexivity as a research method could be considered an attitude towards the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process. The idea of knowledge as embedded within a constructing process between the researcher as a "socially constructed as person-in-a-culture". (Shweder and Miller, 1985, p. 4) and the subject of his/her research as bounded by a socio-cultural system of language, traditions and politics. Within a reflexive system the perspective or position of the researcher shapes all research. Kirsti Malterud (2001) describes the reflexive approach as the position where "The researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the

findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, p. 483).

Frederick Steier (1991) wrote, “We create worlds through the questions that we ask…”. Steier continued to argue “we as researchers construct that which we claim to find”. (Steier, 1991, p. 1). Steier was arguing about the context of the researcher as observer, either active or passive could not keep out of “his own constructions, and to hold onto vestiges of objectivism,” was a naïve proposition. (Steier, 1991, p. 4). The objective positioning, following Donna Haraway (1988) is understood for this research methodology as another “unmark” categories of patriarchal privilege simplifying knowledge and epistemology as universal. Haraway argued, “Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges.” (Haraway,1988, p. 583). Therefore, Haraway posited, “positioning”, in this case of the author/researcher as the “key practice in grounding knowledge.” (Haraway, 1988, p. 587). Thus, situating knowledge to location instead to a transcendence, “allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see.” (Haraway,1988, p. 583). Whereby it is the position of this thesis not to follow Kantian objectivism (Schott, 1988) in this research process.

This thesis relied on informal conversations, not on scripted interviews, thus the positioning of the researcher towards the field conditions (Allen, 2009) situating the researcher is of paramount importance to take into account. This type of research is in no way independent or detached from the author’s involvement within it (Steir, 1991). Therefore, following a self-reflexive approach to research the researcher’s background and positioning shapes and situates his/her interpretation.

Arturo Escobar argued about the self-reflexive relationship of the artist and the architects have with the design process. Escobar posited, “In designing tools, we (humans) design the conditions of our existence and, in turn, the conditions of our designing… we design tools and these tools design us back.” (Escobar, 2018, p. 110). This statement has been a dictum for this research methodology. Furthermore, the notion of reflexivity is understood as a “bending back on itself” (G.H. Mead, 1962). Thus, since reflexivity is a “turning-back of one’s experience upon oneself” (Steier, 1991, p. 2). I, as the researcher should be aware that my own agency as an artist and architect is not autonomous, instead it is bounded to a socially constructed process dependent on what Winograd and Flores (1986) called the deep questions of design. They wrote, “We recognize that in designing tools we are designing ways of being.” (Winograd and Flores, 1986, p. xi). What this means is that the framework of how a research is planned and organized, together with all the “unknown-unknowns” on-the-field experience will inevitably change the structure of the research as the research progresses.

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) wrote that the researcher becomes aware of his own research activities as “telling ourselves a story about ourselves”. In this research there will always be issues of self-reference that informed the methodologies and the research process in general. Nevertheless, the research was considered more as process of social reflexivity, and then, of self-reflexivity as social process (Turner, 1981). The cognitive jump that this research hoped to achieve from the position of the researcher was to be reflective (in showing ourselves to ourselves) and reflexive (being conscious of ourselves as we see ourselves) Steier (1991).

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1.3.2. Grounded theory and critical analysis.

Grounded theory is a good design tool to use when a theory is not available to explain a process (Creswell, 2007).

This particular approach was chosen as part of a mix-methods research approach, because of the need to fill a gap in the literature about the particular research problems this thesis confronted. Although, a phenomenological approach could have emphasized the meaning of an experience for a number of individuals involved and affected by the interventions and works analyzed during the research, the intent here was to follow a mix-methods research, including a grounded theory design to move beyond mere description and to generate a theory, and outline an abstract analytical schema to promote a process of action and change (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The thesis presents the research problem composed of a series of cognitive gaps and errors in the artists and architects' design-thinking methodology, pedagogy and practices as they intervene as socio-spatial agents working in marginalized communities in Latin America. It appears that very little have been written in the context of these interventions in Latin America. Much of what has been written is in the context of uncritical praise in review articles in museum and exhibition catalogues and in art and architecture magazines, reviews and portfolios. A few books have been published in the past 20 years. Books by Luis Camnitzer (2007),

Juan Vicente Aliaga and José Miguel G. Cortés (2014), Bill Kelley Jr. and Grant H. Kester (2017), and Macarena Gómez-Barris (2017, 2018) have been some of the few notable investigations on contemporary art and socio-spatial currents and practices in Latin America. Nevertheless, most of these books take a historical narrative and less a critical examination on socio-spatial practices. Only Gómez-Barris books (2017 & 2018) are a contemporary review of performative and socially engaged art practices from Latin America. Nevertheless, Gómez-Barris narrative is more focused on praising the works because of the site and the artists' subaltern conditions, rather than bringing a critical engagement with the ethics of participation, commercial and professional opportunism, epistemological and labour extractivism and other cognitive errors that this thesis posits as axial conditions materializing into a colonizing attitude in artists and architects' socio-spatial practices in the site of marginalized populations in Latin America.

The theory in this research was generated or "grounded" in conversations with participants who have experienced the process and the sites visited and studied. The researcher generated a general explanation (a theory) of these processes, actions and interactions influence and informed by the views of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), together with a critical analysis of literature review. The social situation of marginalization, disenfranchisement and poverty of the populations that became sites for artist and architect's socio-spatial practices form the research's unit of analysis. The researcher took an epistemic position away from the "all knowing analyst" to the "acknowledged participant" observer (Clarke, 2005, p. xxvii). Therefore, during the on-the-field research, a theory developed, informed

by the researcher's views, positions and learning experiences of the local situations, relationships, and hierarchies of power in the populations of these sites.

The general framework of thought of the researcher was contextualized within the following questions that the researcher kept present during the processes of observation to understand the process of how individuals experienced the sites.

1-What are the cognitive gaps present in the design thinking and practices of many artists and architects working as socio-spatial agents in marginalized communities?

2-Why does a number of socio-spatial projects in marginalized communities tend to reproduce capitalism's colonizing extractivist practices?

3- What are the reasons behind the success and failure of socio-spatial projects?

The challenges in the research were primarily the researcher's needs to set aside, as much as possible, a priori theoretical ideas or notions so that a substantive theory could emerge. Thus was the need for not conducting scripted interviews, instead opening the research process to "uninvited participation" (Schalk, et al, 2018) of informal conversations, observations and encounters.

Critical analysis:

Gary Genosko (1996) wrote about how Michel Foucault expressed his feelings towards theory, "concepts were after all nothing but tools and that theories were equivalent to the boxes that contain them." (Genosko, 1996, p. 173).

Critical analyses of the literature review were the method to shape “the boxes” for the theory developed here. Critical analysis is a tool to properly contextualize the thesis arguments to the wealth of theory already in existence.

From a vast bibliography of well over 300 sources contained within this research, texts are more or less divided between, texts with new ideas and texts referential to new ideas, which in turn reinforce and expand these ideas. The only way to critically analyse the usefulness of a text in the context of this research is by a continuous process of referencing texts to other texts, a kind of archaeological support and validation system. From a very large array of texts from the fields of philosophy, sociology, anthropology, political economy, geography, art, architecture, urbanism, and decolonial feminist theory, many pivotal thinkers and theories emerged as axial thinkers for this research.

In order to understand the effects of socio-spatial agents’ interventions within marginalized and disenfranchised communities in Latin America it is essential to comprehend the instrumental agency, class, gender and race have as institutionalized methods of segregation, racism and violence in everyday life of the people that inhabit these sites. The works of Edward Said (1993), Franz Fanon (1963), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2012), Homi Bhabha (1990,1994), Anibal Quijano (2000), Rita Segato (2018), Veronica Gago (2017), Maria Lugones (2010), Sayak Valencia (2018), Nirmal Puwar (2004), José Medina (2013) and Miranda Fricker (2010) are very important key thinkers for understanding the present situation of these social, political and cultural asymmetric relationships of power.

The works of decolonial feminist’s theorist have been important to understand the processes of colonialism beyond the traditional patriarchal perspective: Rita Segato

(2018), Maria Lugones (2010), Veronica Gago (2017), Audre Lorde (1978, 1984) and Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991,1991).

The principal authors that influenced this research, from a philosophical perspective were: Donna Haraway (1988), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), Martin Heidegger (1954, 1971, 2002), Michel De Certeau (1984), Michel Foucault (1969, 1978, 1980, 1984), Walter Benjamin (1968), and Roland Barthes (1977).

From the art and architectural perspective: Elizabeth Grosz (1992, 1993, 2001), Rosalyn Deutsche (1984,1998), Jane Rendell (2003, 2006), Jeremy Till (1998, 2006, 2011), and Hal Foster (1983, 1987, 1996, 2002, 2011).

From the sociology position: Agnes Heller (1977, 1984, 1994), Chantal Mouffe (2000, 2002, 2007, 2013), Saskia Sassen (2005, 2006, 2014), and Edward Soja (1989, 1996, 2010).

Many more works have informed this research, some more than others. Throughout this thesis a vast landscape of theory is presented as 'archaeological support' to this thesis findings and conclusions.

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1.3.3. Informal conversations.

The on-the-field knowledge learned during the time of research and travel for this thesis relied on informal conversations and critical observations, not on scripted interviews and structured visits that would have required and are depended on the afterthoughts of transcription. Transcription further emphasises the role of the

researcher as interpreter and translator of the experience of the other as seen, represented, filtered and translated through the inadequacies of the language and aesthetics of the researcher. Who by this action become the de-facto speaker and narrator for the other. This represents a hierarchical positioning of the author as epistemic translator, which further illustrates the ingrained prejudice about the other's agency or lack thereof not being able to speak for himself or herself. This is a clear act of epistemic injustice and silencing (Fricker, 2007; Medina, 2013). Frederik Steier (1991) argued, that during the process of interview between the researcher and the subjects of his research "in respondents' reports […] that respondents are perhaps shifting, during the interview, their 'construction' of the person to whom their responses are directed […] from researcher as expert". (Steier, 1991, p. 7). This example further illustrates the need to blur the hierarchies between positions of subject and object of the research.

A conversation should not be transcribed as it defeats its purpose to sense the field (Bourdieau, 1984) of complexities of the other's experience, beliefs and affects. The futility of transcription of a conversation ruins the essence of the informality and the unrehearsed, spontaneous improvised qualities of the moment of exchange between people. Keith Jenkins (1991) argued, "In every act of communication there is an act of translation going on; that every act of speech is an interpretation between privacies" (Jenkins, 1991, p. 39). However, to grasp the intangible nuances of the other's experience, a conversation is the closest to a free enterprise between peoples.

Conversations were chosen over interviews or dialogues for the field research part of the case studies because interviews are a form of scripted participation with a

clear path to interpretation and hierarchical positioning. A dialogue in the other hand is “that which takes place in an irrevocably asymmetrical relationship.” (Karatani, 2005, p. 73), it promotes debate between conflictual conditions searching for the banality of an imaginary consensus. (Bakhin, 1981). Therefore, a conversation is a perfect form of “uninvited participation” (Schalk, et al, 2018) to an open-ended relationship between unclassified agents and hierarchies. Conversations are the only relationships that allows us an imagining of “other worlds” (Lugones, 1987; Petrescu, 2007; Mouffe, 2013). Since language and languaging are inseparable from the particularity of its context (Steier, 1991), conversation allow for an open encounter with the other to become a “transformative learning experience.” (Altés Arlandis, 2018). Frederick Steier (1991) synthesized the context of the conversation, “Multiple conversations are, in effect, multiple realities, no one being the real conversation” none of them is a meta-conversation. “They simple involve different domains […] moving from one conversation to another requires an understanding of issues of translation.” (Steier, 1991, p. 6). The overall purpose of this research was then to become a learning experience not a statistical exercise on collecting data.

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1.4. A critical epistemic methodology.

This thesis proposes a critical epistemic methodology that would start by looking inwards in a critical intersectional contestation of its political and aesthetic values. It would then assemble methods, experiences, and designs from social and public art,

social architecture and critical spatial practices[13] to forge a functional set of operations, tactics and a critical decolonial and epistemological perspective.

The epistemic injustices and colonial thinking that permeate art and architecture practices have to be recognized. Followed by a critique of how this knowledge has been created, legitimized and disseminated to the communities where these projects are intervening. Only then can it be understood the epistemic injustices and silencing that these communities have been subjected to by the practices of socially engaged interventions.

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Gregory Bateson's ideas towards what Frank Barron (1995) called the ecology of creativity comes to play a fundamental role in this research's perspective when defining a transdisciplinary approach to inquiry that recognizes the lived experience and subjectivity of the inquirer (Montuori, 2005). Furthermore, the development of creative integrations between practices that Bateson (2002, p. 19) had alluded to, which *"bring to people's attention a number of cases in which two or more information sources come together to give information of a sort different from what was in either source separately."* This is necessary to start a critical epistemic practice. Pursuing a transdisciplinary way of inquiry that acknowledges the multiplicity of voices, knowledge, simultaneity, trans-geography and epistemic injustices of the hegemonic ways of legitimizing, interpreting, experience and testimony is the beginning of understanding what a critical epistemic practice could

[13] For a further discussion of critical spatial practice in art and architecture see: Marcus Miassen. 2016. 'Crossbenching, Toward participation as Critical Spatial Practice. London: Sternberg Press.

be. Also, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is not a single universal perspective that will contribute towards an *epistemology of justice approach to practice* between audience/user and artist and architect. The artist and architect as social agents inherit the responsibility to be just and inclusive in an ecological way that promotes communal consciousness of solidarity, sustainability, community-building and critical citizenship. Otherwise, the artist and architect are extractivist agents of the same colonialist capitalism that perpetuates the condition of abjection of the poor and marginalized populations.

The methodological gaps created by epistemic injustices can be bridged by further expanding the nexus between socially engaged practices of art and architecture with decolonial feminist theory and socio-spatial practices. If a pattern of connections can be established through a transdisciplinary inquiry between these fields, a meshwork of relationships might be able to be contextualized as a practice (Bateson, 1972; Barron, 1995; Montuori, 2005). Thus, a theoretical and practical foundation for an *epistemology of resistance* (Medina, 2013) could be enabled between the audience/user – *the subaltern marginalized* – and socially engaged artist and architect's practice concerning the social engagement, community-building, and the self-management of public and socially engaged art and architecture initiatives.

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1.5. A speculative hypothesis.

Before speculating whether or not some socially engaged projects are successful, a clear definition of what success is for the purposes of this thesis has to be stated. Success initially appears to be defined by how long the project is still in use by the community.

Socially engaged art and architecture projects that have been successful initially appear to be because the projects were appropriated and connected to the everyday life narrative of the inhabitants of the places and surroundings where these projects were constructed. These projects appear to be the ones that the community helped to build, and the physical structure of the project became a gathering place where the inhabitants started to meet and share not only in the activities initially designed within the project's design. Instead, the people around the project started to create by themselves new uses and activities beyond the project's initial design characteristics. Thus, the people intended to be the audience became users, and re-contextualized the project under their own function beyond the artist and architect's initial social and cultural vision. It could be inferred that the community appropriated the project into their own narrative. The projects that this research studied – *La Perla Bowl* (2006–present) in San Juan, Puerto Rico and *El Potocine* (2013–present) in Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia – both share this narrative of projects appropriated and recontextualized into the everyday narrative of the community. Testament to this is that both projects are still today in daily use and being maintained by the community. For this reason, these projects were chosen to be the case studies of this thesis.

The success of socially engaged projects appears to greatly vary depending on whether there was an existing organized community residing in the place and surroundings where the projects took place. It seems to be much harder to create a lasting socially engaged art or architecture project when there is not a prior sense of community. Therefore, this thesis speculates, the success of socially engaged projects depends on the projects being undertaken where there are established social and communitarian structures organized in already politically empowered communities. Furthermore, the thesis posits, the socially engaged projects by themselves are insufficient to create a sense of place and community consciousness.

Thus, we see the unravelling of the Robinson Crusoe myth (Said, 1992), of artists and architects as socio-spatial agents, whereby they arrive to a *"wilderness"* and tame it into *"civilized culture"* by means of their own technical expertise and ethical, moral, and cultural superiority. These ideas can be rendered as parachuting practices of outdated cultural imperialisms, remnants of the colonizing missions of the age of Empire.

If the design program of the projects intended to be constructed on these sites lack an integrated social relationship with the communities residing on the site, then they would be taken as *"parachuting"* practice. This means that the project's *"life"* will be only temporary; that the project's communal relationships will not last beyond the project's construction and *exhibition life*.[14] Such projects tend not to continue very

[14] By "exhibition life" I am referring to the period of time that the social agent is working with the project and other cultural or social institutions are covering the development of the project, creating a sort of public life of the project.

long after the social agents of the artist or architect leave. Examples of this type of unsuccessful project in Puerto Rico are: *La Perla, Abiertamente* (2005) (Fig.1) by the artist Ana Rivera Marrero, which has been abandoned for many years; *Live-Savers* (2005) by the artist Aaron Salabarrias; and *Escalera como Protesis* (2013) by Arquitectura Expandida. The latter two no longer exist as the sea eroded them both. Another project by Arquitectura Expandida, in San Cristobal, Bogotá, Colombia, *La Casa del Viento* (2010), was burned by members of the community.[15] Although this research is focused only on projects based in Puerto Rico and Colombia for the case studies, many similarities can be found in the social impact these types of projects have in other parts of the world. Other failed socially engaged projects will be discussed later in the thesis.

Figure 9. Ana Rivera Marrero. *La Perla* (2005). Abiertamente..

[15] The projects Escalera como Protesis and La Casa del Viento are documented and discussed in Chapter 2 in the “Case studies” section.

Figure 10. *La Perla* (2020). Abiertamente.

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1.6. Author's position.

"Once again I repeat that I am not an impartial critic. My judgements are nourished by my ideals, my sentiments, my passions."

José Carlos Mariátegui. Lima, Perú 1928.

Roland Barthes wrote, "Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile." (Barthes, 1977, p. 147). Following Barthes' assertion on the necessity to "know" the author in order to make sense of the narration, I thus follow with a brief disclosure of who I am as the author and narrator of this research.

I experience the world around me in the same manner as David Chariandy described his own writing process, “rooted in a very specific embodiment” (Fournier; 2021). Chariandy described himself in his writings as a black man of the Caribbean diaspora. Chariandy was keenly aware of the racialized subjectivity imposed on him and his practice by the world-system (Wallerstein, 2004) that surrounded him.

I embody the agency of the “epistemological colonist” (Willis, 2015). I am a trained artist, informal architect and academic educated in the western academic tradition doing research and building dwellings in Latin America (Fig 11,12,13,14). I have chosen to describe my practice in architecture as informal, as I choose to remain outside the regulated, licensed and professionalized parameters of architecture. My epistemological agency arises from the privilege of a “partial perspective” and “the conquering gaze” (Haraway;1988) of a male body. I inhabit a curious interstice between race, class, diaspora and tourism. I am considered, phenotypically a mestizo[16]. Nevertheless, in my country of birth, Perú, my social position is as – white[17] male, and a tourist since I only live there part-time. I have been treated as a ‘minority’, a white-Hispanic male in the United States, where I studied a BFA and MFA, and I am considered a privilege bourgeois university professor in the country where I reside, Puerto Rico. I embody the foreigner, sometimes I camouflage as Peruvian diaspora in the Caribbean Island country of my mother, Puerto Rico, the last colony, an unincorporated territory of the Unites States since 1898.

[16] Mestizo, it is one of many colonial categorizations to divide peoples by racial mix to legitimize asymmetrical power divisions between indigenous, settlers and European colonist in the Americas.

[17] In this thesis it is argued that ‘white’ and ‘whiteness’ are not a dependent or relational categories of skin color. Instead, they are performative conditions of power. (Castro-Gómez, 2005).

Camouflaging as a foreigner has allowed me to move easily with a critical distance and very little social investment to lose. Albert Camus wrote it succinctly in L'Étranger, "je m'ouvrais pour la première fois á la tender indifference du monde. I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world." (Camus, 1942, p. 9). As an apparent foreigner, a transitory figure of exoticism, a place between treat and seduction, I experience everyday life from a privilege position of motion. I am a white-mestizo male with a foreign accent (my vernacular language is Castellano – Spanish, peppered with an array of national and regional accents from the many countries where I grew up). This particular condition has allowed me to move between countries with the luxury of doubt. Doubt about my national, and ethnic origins has permitted me to maintain a motion in between static definitions and allegiances of nationhood and citizenship.

The philosopher of science Donna Haraway once argued, "positioning is, the key practice in grounding knowledge." (Haraway, 1988, p. 587). As an artist, architect and academic I position myself to see, observe, experience my surroundings critically aware of my own vantage point of a "privilege partial perspective" (Haraway, 1988) of a privilege educated bourgeois –sometimes white male. Thus, I continuously have to check, and re-check myself into a self-reflexive exercise, almost a kind of auto-ethnography of my privilege "unmark position of man" (Haraway, 1988). This "unmark position" a "category" that have allowed me to "see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (Haraway, 1988; 581) have made me conscious of how we (men) decide to act upon and express our position, privilege and agency in our everyday living, and how this positionality will

inevitably construct our perspective and position towards every subject of our effects, affects, love and contingencies.

Privilege becomes a sedimented practice when it remains unchecked, unquestioned and unmarked, almost an ontological vectoring prerogative that frames and contextualizes every experience of everyday life experience. I have a necessity to achieve a cognitive jump beyond the confines of simplistic patriarchal Cartesian world-views towards a personal everyday "practice of freedom" (Freire,1976) critically aware of my own positioning and prejudices.

As a male researcher from Perú, I find it necessary to start my practice as an artist, informal architect and professor with "the notion of the self as site" (Kossak, Petrescu, Schneider, Tyszczuk, and Walker, 2009). Elizabeth Grosz argued that the body itself could be regarded as "the locus and site of inscription for specific modes of subjectivity." (Grosz, 1992, p. 241). Thus, it is in the action to excavate my own subjectivities that became the process of a self-deconstruction towards decolonizing myself from patriarchal expectations and desires. It has not been an easy proposition to achieve.

Elizabeth Grosz positions agency as dependant on how we choose to accept that "designated position" of privilege and related to "the degree to which we refuse it" (Grosz, 2001; 22). Moreover, our identities are tied to this agency and privilege. As Grosz points out "we are effects more than causes [...]" (Grosz, ibid.).

This thesis is grounded at its core to the question of agency and how we position ourselves within "the tricky we" (Reisinger and Schalk; 2017). We as a group

composed of artists and architects with the agency, illusions and hopes to endeavour to be good social agents for social change.

We, artists and architects who venture into the realm of the social, to work with and for marginalized communities on the borderlands of the cities of the Global-South, are to embody the cognitive jump away from extractivist colonizer agents who appropriate knowledge, labour and bodies to further our professional careers, towards instead becoming an engaged socio-spatial agent for change.

I started this research quite naively from the opposite side of what this research eventually became. I initially thought of myself as a socio-spatial agent, an artist/architect interested in working in the public space of marginalized communities. I thought of my thesis as a practice lead research involving myself conducting an intervention to transform public space for open access and participation with the community (Fig. 15). I played into the myth of the artist (Schalk, 2007). I thought of my intervention as an everyday transforming event, a place-making device. I could not be more wrong in my initial naïve assessment of what an artist's intervention actually does in the social realm. I designed prototypes to construct interactive structures that I hoped would engage the public in playful relations towards nurturing conversations and eventually a better understanding between the participants (Fig. 16, 17). My previous work as an artist had made me curious of the social relations formed through interactions and conversations. I explored the uses of technology and architectures as means to enable deeper relationships through conversations (Fig.18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23). Nevertheless, as I started to visit other sites where artists and architects had intervened with their

works as socio-spatial agents, my initial ideas started to change, I questioned what is the role artists and architects embody in these sites. I started to see with suspicion my own subjective positioning and practice. The more I travelled visiting sites of artists' and architects' interventions, the more I was repeatedly confronted with the notion that our practices on the site of poor and marginalized communities that we were aiming to help, were only reproducing the same colonizing and extractivist practices that we were criticizing governments and institutions for embracing neoliberal capitalist policies. Thus, my first cognitive jump towards a self-deconstruction was away from my own academic training as artist and architect. I hoped this apparent jump into a void would allow me a critical distance from the academic disciplines that have shaped the way I perceive and position my practice. The apparent jump into a void was not at all into an empty space, rather it was into the space of decolonial feminist theory and practice. The axial relationship decolonial theory took within my intellectual understanding of my own processes as a man, artist and architect were crucial to my belief that my practice could be decolonized and become more effective beyond the traditional parameters of academia and the institutions of art and architecture.

The following pages of this thesis could be read as my own personal road map through the processes of decolonizing my practice and myself.

Figure 11. Stone House. Rancas, Huayhuaysh Range. Perú. 2007

Figure 12. Stone House. Rancas, Huayhuaysh Range. Perú. 2017.

Figure 13. Artist's studio forest cabin. Karso Range. Ciales. Puerto Rico.1993.

Figure 14. Casa Pukara. Karso Range. Ciales. Puerto Rico.1994.

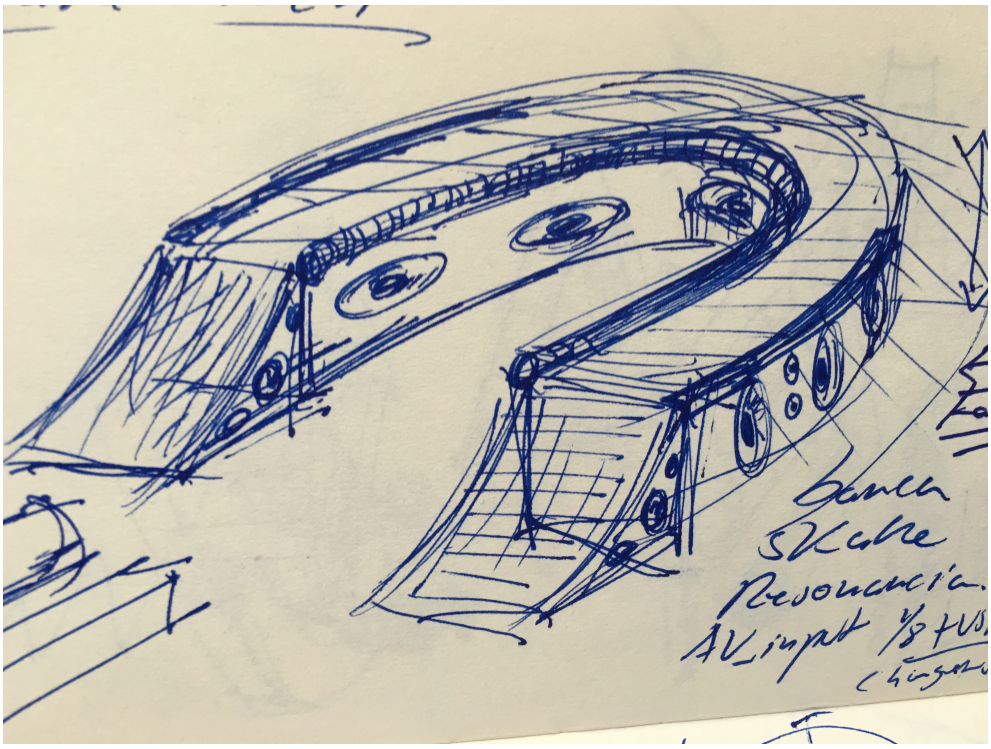

Figure 15. Skater/conversation bench. 2013.

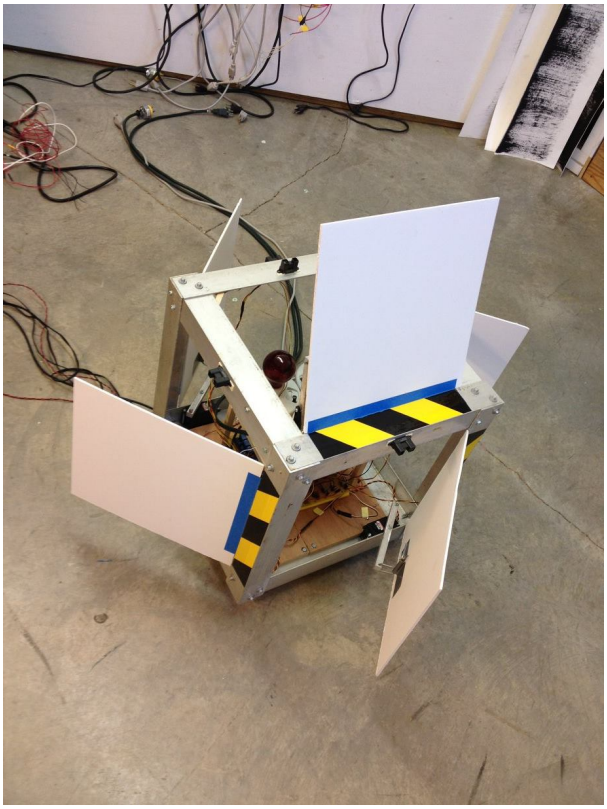

Figure 16. Prototype play box .2013.

Figure 17. Swearing ball. Reactive record-play sound toy/sculpture.2008.

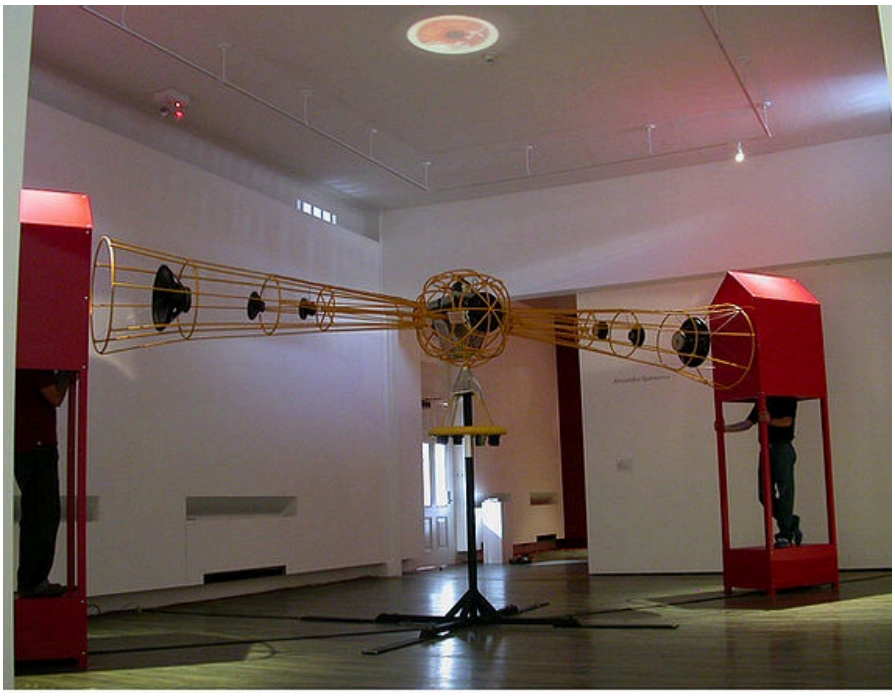

Figure 18. La conversación / the conversation. Kinetic, sound and video interactive installation 2004.

Figure 19. La conversación / the conversation. 2004.

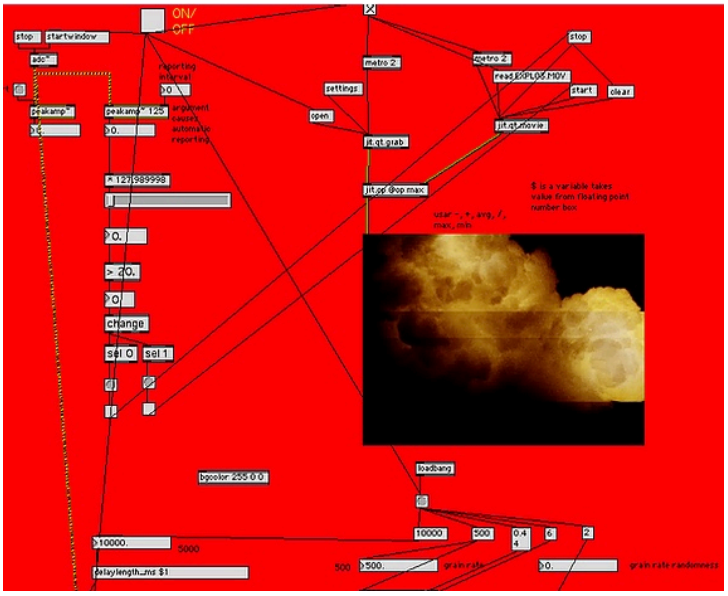

Figure 20. La conversación / the conversation. MAX/MSP patch. 2004.

Figure 21. The Panopticon. Interactive video/sound installation. 2005.

Figure 22. The Panopticon. Interactive video/sound installation. 2005.

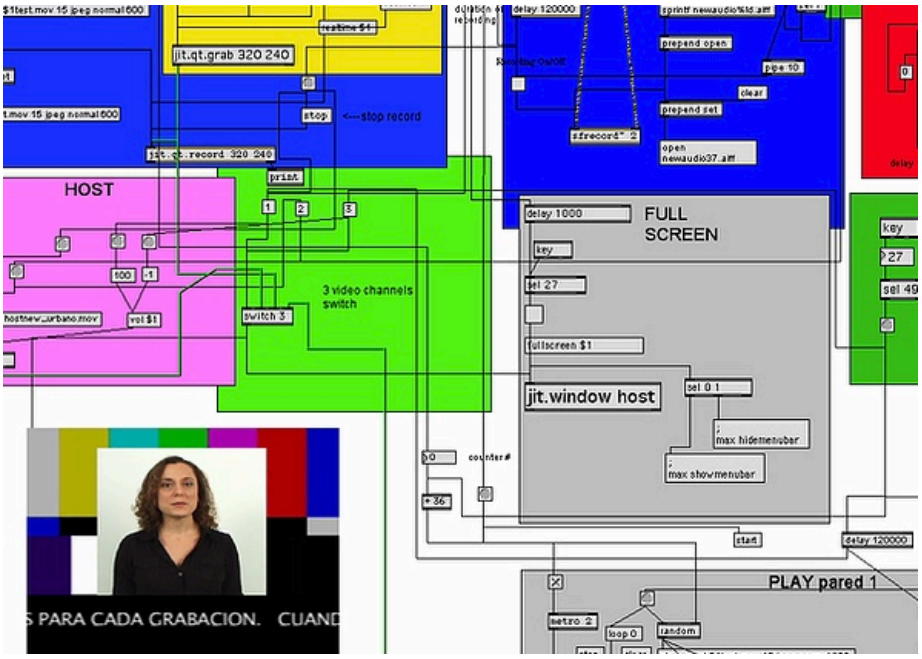

Figure 23. The Panopticon. MAX/MSP patch. 2005.

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Chapter 2. Case studies.

Why these sites were chosen? Frederick Steier (1991) wrote “constructing is a social process, rooted in language, not located inside one’s head…how one might be heard and that meaning is constructed…thus, a reflexive researcher requires an understanding of language”. (Steier, 1991, p. 5).

Beyond the understanding of the vernacular language of any site, I believe any researcher needs to have a feel of the field (Bourdieu, 1984), otherwise the researcher risks only hearing half the story. Arturo Escobar (2018) argued that cognition is not based on the manipulation of knowledge towards achieving an objective. Instead, that the observer (the researcher) is not separated from the conditions of the world that he/she observes. The researcher “creates the

phenomenal domains within which she/he acts; and the world is created through language." (Escobar, 2018, p.111). It is because of these conditions that to choose a site of study that it is far removed from the researcher's life conditions has the potential to become an experience on extractivist tourism rather than an insightful epistemic exercise of learning, understanding, sharing and solidarity. This is why I chose the following sites for research. I have a long personal connection with both countries and cities San Juan, Puerto Rico and Bogota, Colombia and with the regions where these sites are located. I have friends and colleges that I have known for many years who live in these locations. Because of these connections, I was welcomed in these communities. I felt at ease, not because I belonged to them, but rather because my agency as a foreigner was recognized and accepted as a visitor.

This research has been informed by two case studies and an array of personal experiences throughout my years working as an artist/architect visiting various projects in The United States, Perú, Puerto Rico, and Colombia. After experiencing many projects of socially engaged art and architecture in many countries, I observed that many of them fall in disuse and abandonment a short time after the socio-spatial agent leaves the site. Nevertheless, in the literature produced by the institutions that sponsored these projects: museums, galleries, local governments, NGOs, cultural institutions and universities, the life of these projects is only documented to the point of exhibition and catalogue. The archive for socially engaged projects appears more engaged in the portfolio of the individual artists and architects, the exhibition and catalogue, rather than in the effects on the communities where these works were initially designed to fulfil a specific social need.

The two case studies selected to inform the research were chosen because both works of socio-spatial practice are of the few examples of projects that have lasted long after the interest for archive, portfolio and exhibition have dwindle.

The first work is *La Perla Bowl,* located in La Perla neighbourhood in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This work was initially designed and built as an artwork and open community pool/skate park. The second work selected is *El Potocine*[18]*,* located in the *"barriada*" of Potocí, an informal settlement, part of Ciudad Bolivár in Bogotá, Colombia*.* This work was designed to be a community movie theatre and community art centre.

The two projects were chosen for this research because both projects have been successful as being appropriated by their surrounding communities and continue to be actively used many years after the initial artists and architects that designed them have left the sites. The sense is that both projects appeared to have fulfilled their initial functions as design objects and social objects. Both projects have lasted for many years after the artist and architects that designed and built them have left and that both projects are in constant use being taken care of by the community for whom they were designed. This all signals that both projects have been integrated into the everyday lives of the communities' inhabitants.

The research on the case studies site was conducted following a social constructivist qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009) of mix-methods. These

[18] The name *Potocine* can be translated as: *poto*, from the name of the Barrio Potocí, and *cine*, which means "movie theatre".

included: grounded theory research, multiple visits to the sites, field notes and observations and informal conversations.

The informal conversations were conducted with adult persons who were at the time of the visits living in the area. Most of the persons that were part of the conversations had been born and raised in the areas. Some of them had in fact helped build the projects, and some of them continue to take care of the projects. Also included were conversations and visits to the sites with the artist, the architects and the community organizers and other people that participated with these projects and continue to be involved in running or maintaining the projects.

The conversations and personal observations on the sites helped to inform the conclusions of this research. Together with academic theorizing from the fields of sociology, anthropology, political economy, geography, art, architecture, urbanism, and decolonial feminist theory, these conversations and field observations framed these theorizations into a praxis.

This research studied the apparent successes of these socially engaged projects as a means to understand how the design thinking and process together with social relationships between the socio-spatial agents and the community that inhabits these places were developed. What were the specific practice, social and cultural aspects of these projects that made these two projects last, in continuous use, from their construction to today?

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2.1. Case study 1: *La Perla Bowl*.

Figure 24. *La Perla Bowl* community pool and skate bowl (2020).

La Perla, San Juan. Puerto Rico. 2006–present.

Artist: Chemi Rosado-Seijo, in collaboration with Roberto 'Boly' Cortés.

The case study research was informed by several in person visits by the researcher to document research through field notes and informal conversations with various people, including the following persons during the years 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018: Chemi Rosado-Seijo, artist. Marisol Plard, artist and resident of La Perla. Marina Moscoso, insurgent urban planner. Omayra Rivera Crespo, architect and organizer of Taller Creando sin Encargos. Sofia Unanue, community organizer, founder of La

Maraña, human centred design atelier. Erika Fontánez Torres, professor jurisprudence, legal theory and property law, University of Puerto Rico Law School.

Artist Chemi Rosado-Seijo describes the artwork: "*In 2006,* La Perla Bowl (Fig.5)*, a skateboarding bowl and an actual pool, was completed. Done in partnership between artist Chemi Rosado-Seijo with Roberto 'Boly' Cortés, who was a veteran skateboarder since 1976, in teamwork with the neighbours from La Perla community, and with the help of skaters, surfers and people from around the island of Puerto Rico. The bowl was handmade and collaboratively built in front of the Atlantic Ocean on reclaimed land, outside the Old San Juan walls, like the community where it stands.* La Perla Bowl *has gained international recognition through skateboarding magazines and global media"* (Rosado-Seijo, 2015).

Figure 25. *La Perla* surrounded by the colonial walls of Old San Juan (2020). Google Earth.

La Perla neighbourhood (Fig.6) is located just outside the city walls of the Old San Juan colonial town centre; fronted by the Atlantic Ocean on its northern side, and

flanked on three sides by the walls of the colonial city built by the Spanish conquerors from 1586 and fully encircling the city of San Juan by 1783.

La Perla was established around the late 19th century as the abattoir for the old colonial city. It is located on a spit of leftover rocky coast outside the city walls. Its original residents were slaves and the poor workers of the slaughterhouses and it was the place for the town's Santa Maria Magdalena Cemetery. In time the families of the abattoir's workers moved in as the slaughterhouses began to be relocated to other areas of the island. La Perla remained a small community of around no more than 4,000 people, with a reputation as a slum riddled with poverty, crime, prostitution and drug trafficking. La Perla remains occupied by the informal dwellings built by its own inhabitants, on land deemed by the state as an illegal occupation of the state's land. La Perla maintains its informal infrastructure by *"stealing"* electricity and water from the public state's companies; sewage remains discharged untreated to the ocean from a multitude of home-made septic tanks, and the livelihood of its inhabitants is reputedly sustained through government welfare and a *"subterranean"* informal economy that includes smuggling and drug trafficking.

Since the late 70s, La Perla has attracted a style of bohemianism because it is exalted as a poor and marginalized community that keeps on resisting the government's interventions for their eviction. This bohemianism has attracted all kinds of artists, writers and musicians to La Perla. The subsistence of poverty and suffering of La Perla's inhabitants has been romanticized in songs, literature and paintings, coalescing an imaginary community for artists, poets and musicians. In 1978 Ismael Rivera, one of the great international performers of salsa, co-wrote a hit

song with Curet Alonso about La Perla. This event started a fashion in art and music circles of using La Perla as a backdrop for legitimizing the “street credit” of the artist.

In 2009 mainstream performer of *“urban rap”* Calle 13, together with internationally famed musician Ruben Blades, again composed, performed and made a music video for another *“tribute”* song to La Perla as a romantic ideal of social struggle. However, in the last twenty years La Perla has been being slowly art-washed and gentrified, initially by art students from the School of Plastic Arts that it is located close by, just on the inside of the city walls. At the time when he started to build the artwork *La Perla Bowl*, in late 2005, artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo was an art student at the School of Plastic Arts and was living in La Perla. It is very common for poor neighbourhoods to attract art students because of the cheap rents and the romanticized bohemian lifestyle of living in dangerous, disfranchised areas of society.

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Nowadays, La Perla has been pacified by the popular attention it has gained since. It has become a favourite site for art fairs, installations and interventions by architects, and for filming music videos. Nowadays, La Perla is a tourist attraction, having been pacified by artists and made world-wide famous by the 2017 Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee megahit music video “Despacito”, filmed using *La Perla Bowl* as background. The attention brought to La Perla since the early days of the 90s has made public its informal economy and occupation. This has attracted the attention of the government to La Perla’s informality, which has had the effect

described by Veronica Gago (2017) of the insertion of the state's formal institutions and laws into informal communities. Gago described the consequences for a marginalized community of losing their informality as a loss of identity and authority over their own economic and social welfare. Once a marginalized community is "integrated" into the logic of the state, it becomes dependant on a state's system of bureaucracy and corruption. Therefore, the community starts to lose its autonomy and flexibility and its idiosyncrasy as a united community.

The residents of La Perla have been for more than a century an actual community of interrelated families and peoples who have inhabited this place for generations. La Perla maintained its cohesive and closed community in large part because of the abjection and anomie it has been represented by for centuries. This marginalization from the city next to them reinforced their communal bonds as a means of survival. Their *viveza* generated an informal economy and livelihood independent of the state and in resistance to the periodic incursions of the police to vacate them from La Perla. These bonds of resistance made the residents of La Perla a singular resilient, independent and defiant community.

La Perla, by 2010, was in the process of "urban renewal". This phase was initiated by a series of public art festivals sponsored by the government following the attention that *La Perla Bowl* had received by the international art world and art biennales. Artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo has remained active, organizing other public art projects in La Perla. *La Perla's Portrait* is an annual kite festival created by Rosado-Seigo and supported since 2013 by a grant from the Creative Capital organization based in New York. These events brought the attention of land

developers, the government and other private interests that saw in La Perla, just as its name suggests, *a pearl* sitting on oceanfront location waiting to be developed.

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La Perla has been known to me since the early 90s, when I was a young artist hired to teach sculpture at the School of Plastic Arts. Then, La Perla was still considered a dangerous neighbourhood and was not at all considered a tourist attraction. Art students from the School of Plastic Arts routinely found cheap lodging there and started to use La Perla as site for their artworks. My first visit to La Perla as an art teacher was in 1993, as part of a class critique: a student had displayed, to the side of a bar in the main street of La Perla known for the sale of illegal narcotics, a sculpture designed to be a hiding place for illegal narcotics during police raids. By the time the artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo, then still a student the School of Plastic Arts, started to build *La Perla Bowl* in 2006, the community of La Perla was well accustomed to the presence of student artists and their art-class projects.

Artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo's practice building of the *La Perla Bowl* took a couple of years to coalesce into the artwork as it is known today. This artwork has lasted for more than a decade, and is consciously being used and maintained by the community of residents of La Perla, even though La Perla is going through a period of tourist development and gentrification. This is largely attributed to a series of conditions that Rosado-Seigo generated in his relationship as an artist with the community of La Perla, before and during the building of *La Perla Bowl*. Rosado-Seigo's personal relationships with the community and the social cohesion of La Perla's community made it possible for this place to become the site for Rosado-

Seigo's social practice. It could be said that Rosado-Seigo unknowingly developed his own social practice with a sensibility, solidarity, and critical epistemology naturally flowing from his learning experiences with the community.

The series of relationship can be catalogued as follows:

- The artist was a resident of La Perla during his school years as an art student. He knew members of the community and was known by the community.

- La Perla was already a tightly knit community with a clear and defined leadership before the artist arrived.

- The artist as a young art student and resident of La Perla attracted the curiosity of members of the community when he, together with Boly Cortés, started clearing an abandoned vacant space, and started to gather found materials around La Perla.

- Members of the community started to donate sacks of cement and leftover cinder blocks to the artist. It is important to note that La Perla is a self-build dwelling, where most residents continuously construct and reconstruct their own dwellings. Thus, building knowledge and techniques of working with cement, rebar and cinder block are part of the vernacular architecture of La Perla.

- Chemi Rosado-Seigo's humble, friendly and open-to-learning attitude attracted the solidarity of members of the community, who freely started

helping him in the building of *La Perla Bowl*; women from the community even started to feed the artist and his helpers as they took a liking to them.

- Although the community initially did not understand the idea of the artwork, they understood the function of a pool in their community.

- The fact that Rosado-Seigo was a young artist not affiliated with any art institution or government program created a personal sense of trust between him and the community.

- The community always (and does still today) saw the artist just as Chemi the person, and not as an artist incarnating the role of expert agent of social change.

- This became a process of open participation by members of the community that transformed the original purpose of the artwork from a skate rink for surfers and skaters to include also the role as community pool open to everybody.

Figure 26. *La Perla* and *La Perla Bowl* (2020). Google Earth.

Through multiple visits to *La Perla Bowl* (Fig.7) between 2016 and 2018, many conversations took place with residents and national visitors, as well as with tourists. There is not a single consensus within each group or between groups about the social impact of *La Perla Bowl* beyond that all enjoy using it.

Rosado-Seigo's artwork predated all the developments that were to come to La Perla. It is very possible that *La Perla Bowl* anticipated and at some extent promoted the ultimate *pacification by art*[19], gentrification and ultimately the expulsion of the community of La Perla.

It is also true that the development of La Perla was eventually to happen, if not catalyzed by the permanence of Rosado-Seigo's artwork then by real-estate development following the tourism boom brought by the *Bourdain effect*[20] on travelling in the so-called "third world". In today's globalized consumer capitalism there is nothing that can remain local for long. *Glocalites* (Meyrowitz, 2005) is the new name for the oxymoronic representation of a positivist naive attitude that seeks to resist globalized consumer-capitalism homogenizing desires by thinking that the local can be sustained even in a globalized society. Sociologist Roland Robertson (1980), who coined the term *glocalization*, meant "*the simultaneity—the co-presence—of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies"* (Robertson, 1980).

[19] *Pacification by art* is a take on Sharon Zukin's term *pacification by cappuccino* (1995).
[20] *Bourdain effect*: named after cook, writer and media personality Anthony Bourdain. The adventuring free bohemian spirit of a neo-colonizing *tourism as traveller* of the white heterosexual male who fashionizes and pacifies dangerous and marginal "third world" locations in his search for adventure.

Nevertheless, La Perla is today a tourist attraction, listed in Airbnb as *"an old and very particular neighborhood that became famous after the recording of the music video* 'Des-pa-cito' *(Luis Fonsi ft. Daddy Yankee)"* (Airbnb review, 2020). Rosado-Seigo's artwork *La Perla Bowl* remains as a testament to the power artist's interventions do have on marginalized communities. Some people in the community say that this was for the good of the community; others see it as the trigger that started their eventual expulsion from La Perla.

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After *La Perla Bowl* gained notoriety in the international art world, La Perla became a fashionable site for more government-sponsored artist and architect interventions. In 2013 an architecture collective based in San Juan Puerto Rico, Taller Creando sin Encargos, comprising architects Yazmín M. Crespo, Irvis González, Omayra Rivera and Andrea Bauza, with the sponsorship of the School of Architecture of the Pontificate Catholic University of Puerto Rico, organized a series of interventions and workshops in La Perla. Their aim was "to create a forum for participative work between universities, students, academics, international guests, artists, communities […] focusing on the laboratory and action" (arquitecturaexpandida.org, 2013). Their work constituted a series of workshops and architectural interventions. Their methodology and praxis remained within the formalities of the traditional, Henry Sanoff's community-based design learning model and praxis (Sanoff, 1999). Thus, their works consisted of the parachuting practices critiqued in this thesis. Their workshops and interventions lasted a week, without leaving any discernible contribution to the community. Nevertheless, a series of catalogues and publicity was produced to show the university's engagement with socially marginalized poor

communities, and the collective Taller Creando sin Encargos gained a legitimizing project to show in their own publicity. The atelier Arquitecture Expandida based in Bogotá, Colombia was invited to participate. Their contribution was quite “silly”, to quote some of the residents of La Perla who witnessed the event (Fig 8). It consisted of fixing a cement staircase that led to the coast from the street above in La Perla. The stairs have been eroded and the last few steps were demolished in the passing storm a few years back. Arquitecture Expandida proposed building back the stairs to help the community regain access to the beach, and adding a station for surfers to change. The project was named *Escalera como Protesis* (*Stairs as Prosthesis*). Part of the proposal was for members of the community to participate with students of the School of Architecture of the Pontificate Catholic University of Puerto Rico. Therefore, the community and the students would engage in a participatory learning experience on modern techniques. The result was not what the community expected. The members of La Perla community are adept builders on concrete and masonry. Most of them have constructed their own houses in a communal vernacular form of organized construction that dates almost a century.

Figure 27. Intervention by Arquitecture Expandida (2013). View of the remaining stairs leading to the beach, before the workshops.

Figure 28. Arquitecture Expandida and the students from the School of Architecture of the Pontificate Catholic University. *Escalera como Protesis* (*Stairs as Prosthesis*) (2013).

The community members did not participate in the construction or the workshops. The project was built by students from the School of Architecture of the Pontificate Catholic University (Fig.9). The whole exercise resulted in an example of architecture as a reflexive practice, and the marginalized community as backdrop to legitimize an inconsequential event. Nonetheless, this event still appears in the university's publicity to illustrate their social commitment with poor and marginalized communities.

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During on the field visits to La Perla, I had many conversations with artist Chemi Rosado-Seijo and artist Marisol Plard. Many ideas started to sprout about the role of the artist and architect's interventions in marginalized communities. During this time the idea that the artist and architect were acting as a form of colonizer agent began to appear. This concept I further develop in chapter 6.

In conversations with the insurgent urban planner Marina Moscoso, ideas on a critique on traditional planning participation and the misconceptions on community and marginalization were brought to the forefront of the social problematic in artists and architects social practices, which I later developed on chapter 5.

The architect and organizer of Taller Creando sin Encargos, Omayra Rivera Crespo, together with Sofia Unanue, community organizer and founder of La Maraña, human centred design atelier, both were important for this research to see and experience in action the cognitive gaps in participatory urban planning and community participation methodology, which architect Meike Schalk describes as, prescribed tokenism (Schalk, et al, 2018). These experiences contributed to develop the ideas

of cognitive gaps in art and architecture's socio spatial practices, which I later develop in chapter 4.

The conversations with legal theory and jurisprudence professor Erika Fontánez Torres, brought to the forefront the importance of a political framework necessary for a in depth site analysis, specially when working in marginalize communities. These ideas for a socio-political framework for site analysis I further develop in chapter 5.

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Figure 29. *El Potocine*, community self-managed movie theatre (2016). Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia.

2.2. Case study 2: *El Potocine*

Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia. 2016–present.

Architects: Atelier Arquitectura Expandida – Architect Harold Guyaux, Belgium, and Architect Ana López Ortego, Spain.

Commissioned by the community organization Ojo al Sancocho.

The case study research was informed by several in person visits by the researcher to document research through fieldwork notes and informal conversations with various individuals, the following persons informed this case study during the years 2017, 2018, 2019: Angie Santiago, and Carolina Dorado, organizers Ojo al Sancocho community organization. Liliana Parra, participant of Ojo al Sancocho's video making workshops, and resident of Ciudad Bolivar. Gladys Angulo, anthropologist based on Bogota Colombia. Architects Ana López Ortega (Spain) and Harold Guyaux (Belgium) founders of atelier Arquitectura Expandida.

El Potocine is a social-architecture design project (Fig.17). It is a community self-managed movie theatre, designed by the architecture collective Arquitectura Expandida, based in Bogotá and commissioned by Ojo al Sancocho, a local NGO community organization. It was co-operatively built by the architecture collective Arquitectura Expandida together with the community organization Ojo al Sancocho, and the collectives Monstruación, and Golpe de Barrio (Esquizofrenia Crew). *El Potocine* is located in the neighbourhood Barrio in Potocí in the *barriada*[21] of Ciudad

[21]*Barriadas* is the local word used in Latin American Spanish for marginalized, poor and informal settlements constructed in the periphery cities. Other words used to name such

Bolivár in Bogotá, Colombia. The community organization Ojo al Sancocho remains in charge of *El Potocine*'s management, activities and education programming.

The social tectonics of Ciudad Bolivár have changed enormously in the past 30 years. There has been exponential population growth over the past 30 years, together with the subsequent enormous land occupations that have periodically continued since the initial informal settlements in the 1940s. Ciudad Bolivár today, with an estimated population of more than 1 million, is the largest informal human settlement in Colombia. The name *barriada* no longer applies to Ciudad Bolivár; its size has caused it to be recognized by the official government of Bogotá as its 19th district. Nevertheless, Ciudad Bolivár continues to grow, and its expanding margins are still informal settlements of great poverty without any public infrastructure. The neighbourhood of Barrio in Potocí, where *El Potocine* is located, is an older part of Ciudad Bolivár, and it is now a more developed part of Ciudad Bolivár where public utilities and schools are present. Still, the community relies heavily on its grassroots community organizations to run and maintain the limited public infrastructure provided by the state. The community organizations that work within Ciudad Bolivár have to balance and negotiate their own presence and actions in a paradoxical balance between the armed forces of Colombia, the local police and the *narcotraficantes*[22] that are firmly established in the community.

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settlements are *favelas* (in Brazil) and *pueblos jovenes* (in Perú); a close translation in English would be "slums".

[22]*Narcotraficantes* are drug traffickers.

Figure 30. *El Potocine*, community self-managed movie theatre (2016). View of Ciudad Bolivár.

El Potocine has a different story to most other projects of social architecture. *El Potocine* was not the independent initiative of the design collective Atelier Arquitectura Expandida that designed and helped with its construction. *El Potocine* was an idea created by the community organization Ojo al Sancocho, based in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Bolivár. Ojo al Sancocho is a grassroots organization created by young persons who are native residents of Ciudad Bolivár. Together with other organizations based in Ciudad Bolivár, they decided to build *El Potocine*. To this end Ojo al Sancocho approached the Atelier Arquitectura Expandida for help in the design of *El Potocine*.

The Atelier Arquitectura Expandida has been based in Bogotá from the early 2010s and was known for its works on social-architecture projects in poor communities.

I visited the members of Arquitectura Expandida in March 2018. We shared many interesting conversations about their works in Colombia and their intervention in Puerto Rico, which they themselves categorized as an unsuccessful event. They put me in contact with members of Ojo al Sancocho, who invited me to visit Ciudad Bolivár and took me on a tour of *El Potocine*. During the conversation between the many members of Ojo al Sancocho as well with Harold Guyaux and Ana López Ortego of Arquitectura Expandida, many observations came to light about the design process and practice that have made *El Potocine* a successful lasting work of social architecture. The observations are as follows:

- The Atelier Arquitectura Expandida was invited into the community by a local community organization. Arquitectura Expandida did not parachute into the community with an already designed project.

- The design of the project was made in conversation with the members of Ojo al Sancocho, who are native local residents who clearly could define what they needed as a community. Arquitectura Expandida listened to their voices throughout the design process.

- Arquitectura Expandida did not engage in traditional participatory strategies of human-centred design, nor did they try to follow collaborative design practices of community-based design architecture.

- Arquitectura Expandida related to the community's needs as a client-architect model. Arquitectura Expandida listened to the community as a client and not as a helpless, poor, ignorant community.

- The design, materials and construction techniques were based on readily available cheap, re-used and donated materials. The construction was based on vernacular building techniques. Thus, members of the community participated in the construction of *El Potocine*.

- The construction of *El Potocine* became a social communal event, reminiscent of the communal work *"faenas"* done by rural native communities in the Andean region of Colombia.

These events constituted a critical epistemic practice of solidarity and sensibility towards the community and their living space. It is because of this practice that *El Potocine* continues to serve and be appreciated by its community.

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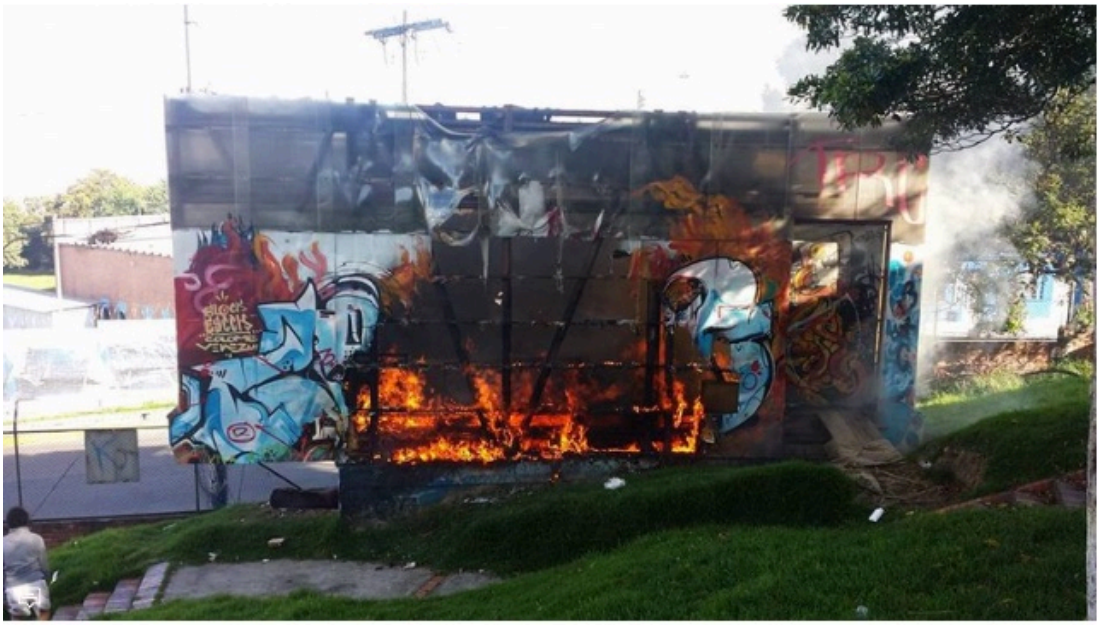

Figure 31. *La Casa del Viento* burns (2010).

La Casa del Viento (House of Wind) (Fig.was a community library designed by Arquitectura Expandida in 2010 in the district of San Cristobal in Bogotá. In this case the project was built without knowing the political differences and rivalries between the leadership of the community. In San Cristobal it was the case that one of the community leaders was affiliated with the ruling government party. The community organizations that worked with Arquitectura Expandida were independent organizations separate from the political-party leadership. The mistake with this project was the assumption that the community was a single united entity and the failure to see that within the community there were many conflictive parties competing for leadership. The leader of one part of the community saw the building of La Casa del Viento as a threat to his own political aspirations. It is thought that this leader was responsible for the arson of La Casa del Viento. This experience educated the members of Arquitectura Expandida to take a critical perspective in the politics of the communities and to avoid the perspective error of assuming a community as a unitary homogeneous political social structure.

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During my field visits, I had the opportunity to meet a person who was a young girl when *El Potocine* was being built. Liliana Parra conveyed to me the importance that this work had on her education. Her school periodically participated in film and video workshops offered in *El Potocine* by Ojo al Sancocho, and she regularly attended film festivals organized in *El Potocine*. She said that *El Potocine* opened to her a world beyond Ciudad Bolivár. Today, she lives on the north coast of Colombia

and is involved with environmental organizations and activism protecting Colombia's natural heritage. This particular moment enlightened me to the positive possibilities these kind of projects could have if done epistemically responsible and socially sensible together with the people and communities that inhabit these sites. These methods I further explore in chapter 7.

During these conversations on the field with organizers Angie Santiago, and Carolina Dorado, founders of Ojo al Sancocho and participants like Liliana Parra, in Ciudad Bolivar were when my first suspicions appeared about the traditional script of community participation. The conversations between architect Ana López Ortega and architect Harold Guyaux further asserted these doubts. In my field notes Ana López Ortega called participation in these kinds of community architecture projects a simulacra pasted over the conflicts of coexistence. Ana López Ortega and Harold Guyaux referred to their practice that evolved through the years of working in Colombia as a kind of tactical provocations and a rupture with the machine of consensus. These concepts became key ideas in developing my critique on the public as a hypothesis and on the myth of participation (Chapter 6).

The Colombian anthropologist Gladys Angulo brought further attention to what she explained as a consistent lack of local and national knowledge not only from foreign artists and architects working in disfranchised communities in the informal human settlements surrounding Bogota, but also from national artists and architect who, she said, were more knowledgeable about international styles and Americo-European political history than the local history of the communities where they were working. These points reinforced my initial ideas about the need for a socio-political

formation for artists and architects, which I start to explore in Chapter 3 as a key cognitive gap in the traditional art and design patriarchal pedagogy.

Chapter 3. Framing the problem.

This chapter explores the socio-spatial situations where art and architecture's social practices are nowadays situated. The artist and architect have been since the early 90s involved in generating new socio-spatial processes that opened new fields of practice for their disciplines. However, both disciplines have attempted a social practice since the early 60s, with environment art, happenings and "activities" as forms of social practice, from the Situationist International 1952–1972 (Kaprow, 1993), social sculpture (Beuys, 1970s), Gordon Matta-Clark's New York City artists' co-operative project FOOD (1971–73), to the Latin American social conceptualism movement Tucuman Arde (1968) public interventions and political happenings (Camnitzer, 2007). Architecture also searched for a new function in new forms of intervention in the social realm, from Cedric Price, Paul Barker, and Reyner Banham's (1969) Non-Plan urban planning proposal, to the interactive social environments experiments of the utopian architecture group Archigram (1961), and the works of the Anarchitecture group (1970s). Another strong influence came from the side of social housing research and praxis. Some of the influences that established an early foundation for an art and architecture social practice were the work architect John F. C. Turner did on informal architecture and social organization in marginalized, poor settlements outside Lima, Perú (1976), the work architect

Nabeel Hamdi's (1991) participatory social housing research in India and London, and Samuel Mockbee and D. K Ruth's Rural Studio (1993) pedagogy for collaborative design housing practices in communities in extreme poverty in the southern United States.

Thus, following Cedric Price's assertion that "*architecture is too slow to solve problems*" (Price, 2003, p. 57), many architects interested in developing a social practice went on to look for ways to "*create new appetites, new hungers"* in the social realm of the marginalized poor community to reinvent their practices into a valuable social function.

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This research is centred in the conflictual negotiations between the Western academic tradition of art and architecture social practice and the human geographies where these practices are exercised. The locations where these practices of socially engaged art and architecture projects, interventions, collaborations, artworks and workshops take place have been chosen by the artists and architects because of their unique appeal of their human constituency and the openness in their social and political informality. This informality is understood to be a way of navigating everyday life outside the social, political and juridical order of the state (Nezar, 2004). The locations where these populations of poor, displaced, and migrant workers settled at "the margins" of the city in search of a better life are usually regarded as informal settlements constituted by the "community" of the "marginalized".

These are the locations, and social relationships, that have attracted artists and architects to work in the public spaces and social conditions of the “community of the marginalized”. Within the context of the social-public space, the artists’ and architects’ operations of their practices are different to the usual academic practices of the private space of the artist and the architect’s design studio. Therefore, an understanding of the geopolitical situation of the human populations that inhabit these locations, their social and political interrelations and the causality of why artists and architects have chosen to work within these locations are the interest of this thesis.

A socio-cultural and political-economy overview of the location is necessary to start to understand why marginalized communities have been attractive to artists and architects. As well as a critique of art and architectural practices, their patriarchal and colonial ideological origins, their commodification, and their subsequent crisis of legitimacy are necessary to understand as a practice that is situated in social fields instead of private studio spaces. The so-called *social-turn* (Bishop, 2006) in art and architecture practices has to be understood in terms beyond the artist and architect protagonist mythology, the art-object, and the architecture. It also needs to be thought in terms of its social effect and political legacy on *the social field and the social actors* (Bourdieu, 1977) – the people who inhabit the day-to-day places where these practices take place. Who are these people? What do they gain from these practices of artists and architects who at times seem to surprisingly parachute into their communities? What are these artists and architects looking for by engaging in these social practices? These are some of the transcendental questions it is necessary to appropriately frame.

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3.1. Definitions.

"When there's no name for a problem, you can't solve it. When you can't see a problem, you can't solve it" (Crenshaw, 2016).

Kimberlé Crenshaw presents us with the principal problem that lies at the nexus of art and architecture's social practices: the problem of naming. In the course of this research this caveat will come to be deconstructed into the array of epistemic errors that have contributed to the ineffective and exploitative social practices of artist and architects. Naming is a complex authoritarian process that reifies hierarchies and sediments history's narrative from the perspective of the victors.

This is not a glossary; it is a critical overview of key concepts in this research. This section contains a series of definitions of key terms that consolidate abstract ideas into tangible, graspable concepts necessary for properly understanding this research. The speculative nature of these definitions is framed by the *conceptual blindness* that lies between the universal character of the Eurocentric colonial definitions and the localized character of the decolonial definitions.

This thesis challenges many established practices in art and architecture practices and theory. It also finds antinomies in our own social praxis and consciousness of how we come to feel and understand the functions of art and architecture in our own lives. The thesis critically questions the *sedimented practices* that we take for granted as normative, unquestionable and ever-present in our everyday relationship with art and architecture. This thesis is to question from a decolonial feminist

critique the hermeneutical conditioning that we have grown accustomed to accept as an unchallenged set of interpretations and epistemic legitimization and hegemonic agency of power structures and institutions over everyday life practices.

In order to avoid the uncritical epistemic pitfalls of reproducing knowledge produced somewhere else, critical epistemic perspective and hermeneutics has been taken in analysing their localized social meaning and purposes. This is not by any means a simple reinterpretation of terms. On the contrary, these are sceptical observations of how language becomes a weapon and to whom these weapons serve.

This thesis will be challenging many reified definitions that structure our quotidian experiences of daily life. Followed by speculating on concomitant, simultaneous and transversal alternative definitions to envision and understand the everyday experience beyond our own socio-political positioning and life experience. The thesis argues that we all experience our everyday life from and within a limited social perspective, framed by segregations of class, gender, sexuality, *"race"*[23], family, phenotype, etc.

The parameters that enclose our individual understandings lie in the social positioning that each of us occupy and are designated to play in the society and culture we inhabit. This social, political and cultural positioning is dictated by social

[23]The invention of race was created on the 1500s to biologically and theologically legitimize, both ethically and morally, the colonization of the new world and the extraction of slave labour from the bodies of the conquered. *"The codification of the differences between the conqueror and the conquered in the idea of 'race', a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the others"* (Quijano, 2000, p. 533).

determinants that affect all of us; and determine the social expressions that we inhabit from positions of power to marginalization, sexual identities and our somatic depths, experiences and somatic norms (Puwar, 2004). Some of us were born into one of these social expressions, but many more were forced into one by being expelled from their own.

In order to decolonize our understanding of the living environment around us, we have to start by recognizing the ways by which, historically, meanings have been constructed and assimilated into our social consciousness in order to name and define the world around us in support of asymmetric power relations based on class, race and gender. Perpetuating *culturalisms* (Segato, 2018), fundamentalisms, nationalisms, political structures and social hierarchies concomitant with consumer capitalism colonizing practices; together with the global gospel of commodification of the everyday life experience, desire and convenience.

Charles Mills criticized the field of the academy for unquestionably accepting *"tacitly taking the white body as normative"* (Mills, 1998, p. 120). Privileging and supporting the vision and history of the world from the perspective of the *universal norm* of the Anglo-European heteronormative male white body: the universal human form and *somatic norm* (Puwar.2004). Therefore, the complicity of language as an instrument of power is the site to start challenging universalism and the resulting colonizing sedimented genderized and racialized social and political practices. Thus, all previous definitions from the established hegemonic institutions of knowledge legitimization –: museums, academia, and the state – are to be viewed with suspicion. As Rita Segato pronounced in 2019 during Lima's International

Book Fair in Perú: *“everything that reinforces our own certitudes has to be seen with suspicion”*.

The fundamental institutions that are the locus of the fabrication of an imaginary cosmology of epistemic legitimacy that rationalizes the paradigms of social control and power dynamics of desire, class, gender, and the racialized hierarchies embodied in the construction of the mythologies of the nation, are the visible state and the invisible forces of capitalism.

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There are many conflicts when writing about these kinds of projects that are built in marginalized communities. Many of the terminologies used to describe the site and the people who live there are pejorative and continue to reproduce racist, sexist, and patriarchal attitudes and violence over these communities.

It is difficult to name the type of settlements where these works are placed. The places where these works are located have been called by many names throughout the years. As government policies change, social and community organizations arise from within these settlements and the influence of the presence of third-sector organizations is more visible; the words that have been used to name, describe and thus stigmatize these communities are in constant flux.

The traditional term in use was *barriada. Favela* is the Brazilian-Portuguese translation, and is the most popularly known term in common usage in academic, political and social literature. A proper English translation would be *slum*. *Barriada*

has always been a derogatory term used to stigmatize its inhabitants to the lowest abject strata of society.

Herein lies the problem of using terms that reproduce patriarchal colonialist disdain and hierarchy. It is important, when we are using them, that we recognize their proper historical context to avoid washing over the historical injustices that have been perpetrated towards these populations. Then, the use of terms such as *barriada* should be used as means to reaffirm that the injustices are still in place.

Wash-over terms, installed by governmental agencies and third-sector organizations to name the *barriada*, have included: *land invasions*, *informal settlements*, *young towns*, and the latest appeasing term, *human settlements*. Each new term carries with it the power of language as an instrument of the ruling class. Each term does bring an image of the legality, temporality and agency or lack thereof that each settlement has.

The same goes for the use of the term *the marginalized*. It is another problematic term to use or to disavow. Sayak Valencia (2018) argued that the use of this term should be stopped because it perpetuates a condition of intellectual complacency and political idyll necessary to stop the martyrization of the poor as victims or heroes. This is further discussed in Chapter 3, under the section ‘The Marginalized’.

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3.1.1. The socio-spatial agent.

This thesis is concerned with the socio-spatial practices that a particular kind of artists and architects has chosen to follow in the social realm of marginalized populations, especially, in the context of this research located in the Global South. These practices have been addressed in art and architecture by many names, being the latest widely used term, *socially engaged* practices.

Borrowing the term “spatial agent” from Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative (Dwyer and Thorne, 2007), together with Gerald Raunig (2009), who suggested the term “critically engaged artistic practice”, to explain a practice, which interweaves social criticism, institutional critique and self-criticism as its mode of operation. For the purposes of this research, I would be addressing these artists and architects who are working within the social and spatial context of marginalized communities in the Global South as socio-spatial agents. Following Raunig’s (2009) postulate of an artistic practice as being critically engage this thesis argues that the socio-spatial agent in many cases lacks the socio-political and historical foundations to act *critically* within the context of its own positioning within its own practice. Critically refers to works that simultaneously question hegemonic ideologies, socio-political problems, while exploring the particular disciplinary procedures that confine art and architecture into an instrumentalist function instead of an “emancipatory project” (Lahiji, 2016).

Nevertheless, the socio-spatial agent designs, structures and orchestrates the system-project, the participation and the epistemic agency and production. The intention of naming the socio-spatial agent is to group together an array of

individuals and practitioners from the artistic to the architectural including the syncretic manifestations that sprout between the interstices of these disciplines when working within the realm of the social. This relational practice grounded on the social as site and context is further problematized by the paradoxical conditions of the artist and architect's role as expert professionals and agents of epistemic hegemony, simultaneously located in the seemingly emancipatory role of the social agent for social good, participation, collaboration and solidarity.

Here the thesis confronts another paradoxical condition in the use of what Karin Reisinger and Meike Schalk describe as the "tricky we" (Reisinger and Schalk, 2017). The allusion to the use of the pronoun "we" during the research and writing of this thesis refers to the relational condition of a syncretic academic identity that categorizes the author as an artist as well as an architect. This "we", refers to the ideas that Meike Schalk and Karin Reisinger outlined as a feminist strategy to make visible the author, to understand how to see ourselves in relation to, and by others "not as a foundation, but what we are working toward." (Ahmed, 2017, p. 7). Following what Donna Haraway (2016) described "we" as "part of an environment and entangled in multiple dependencies." (Haraway,2016, p. 7).

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3.1.2. Intersectionality.

The principal lacuna embedded in the methodologies of socio-spatial agents practices lies in the failure to recognize the root of any social problem as composed by many intersecting social, economic, political, gender, racial, class, and cultural elements. The simultaneous dynamic relations between all these elements,

contextualized within conflictual constructs between an official institutional history vs. a local history, makes the design of a social practice a complex endeavour. Nevertheless, the design of a responsible social practice needs to understand and apply an intersectional approach to its research and praxis.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw initially coined the term *intersectionality* in 1989. The praxis of intersectionality presented how the intersecting conditions of gender, race and class structured the social and judicial systems of segregation and discrimination of black women (Crenshaw, 1989). The theory has been proven to provide an insightful landscape of the multiple conditions – race, gender, class, phenotype, sex, sexuality, ability, nationality, citizenship, religion and body type – that intersect to frame the relationships of power in contemporary Western capitalist societies.

Patricia Hill Collins (2015) referred to intersectionality as *"the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena"* (Hill Collins, 2015, p.1). Intersectionality is a method to describe how our overlapping social categories, constructed identities and power relationships relate to the structures of racism and oppression sedimented on our everyday practices. Intersectionality presents how a problem is not the result of a single condition but instead is the additive effects of multiple simultaneous and historical conditions brought into the mix to result into a new contemporary condition.

Crenshaw argued that *"The problem is, in part, a framing problem"* (Crenshaw, 2016); the necessity to have a clear frame of references from where locates and

names the locus of injustice. *"Without frames that are capacious enough to address all the ways that disadvantages and burdens play out for all members of a particular group, the efforts to mobilize resources to address a social problem will be partial and exclusionary"* (Crenshaw, 2016).

Standing at the intersection of socio-political injustices; intersectionality operates on multiple levels, creating multidimensional experiences. Hence, for this research the practice of intersectionality has been as Patricia Hill Collins argued: "*a knowledge project whose raison d'être lies in its attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities"*. Thus, this research followed Patricia Hill Collins's argument: *"intersectionality as an analytical strategy that provides new angles of vision on social phenomena; and intersectionality as critical praxis that informs social justice projects"* (Hill Collins, 2015, p. 1). For this research intersectionality is a methodology, a praxis, and most importantly a way to feel through the invisibilities of power interrelationships that structure injustices from the somatic to the epistemic, to the violence monopoly of the state, to the epistemic error embedded in the social practices of the artists and architects. Intersectionality is not an approach to problem solving; instead it is a method to identify the sources of the problem.

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3.1.3. Plasticity of words.

Jean Baudrillard called words *"bearers and generators of ideas – perhaps even more than the reverse"* (Baudrillard, 2003, p. ix). He continuous to address those words acquire dynamic meanings as words *"metabolise into one another by kind of*

spiral evolution". He refers to this phenomenon as the *"temporality of words"*. What Baudrillard is positing is that the ideas contained within the signified container of the word changes evolve as the usage of the word expands in *"successive metaphorizations"*. Following the actions in which words are continually generating and regenerating ideas, Baudrillard assigns words the action of *"shifters".* By this he explains that *"ideas intersect, intermingle at the level of the word"*; words acquire new meanings through their social interactions.

"Because words pass, then; because they pass away, metamorphose, become 'passers' or vehicles of ideas along unforeseen channels not calculated in advance" (Baudrillard, 2003, p. x).

Now arises the question: *In what social interactions do words own their meanings?*

Baudrillard followed Wittgenstein, who argued that words do not have a fixed meaning (Wittgenstein, 1953). They are signified and re-signified by the social interactions that surround their everyday usage in language. Words acquire their meaning by the people who are using them. As such, meaning is relational to the social, political and cultural situations where the people that are using them dwell. Their meaning is relational to two spaces of signification: one, the external or social arena of exchange; two, the internal space of the colonized subject's interpretation and translation.

The colonized and the marginalized materialized their own *"linguistic codes"* (Bernstein, 1960) as a means of camouflaging their own restrictive and elaborated social dialects used by the middle to lower classes to protect their communications from the hegemonic authority.

The external social space is territorialized and dominated by suitable *universal definitions* and behaviours designated by and in support of the hegemonic institutions of power. Territorialized into divisions of taste and class, these external definitions guarantee the continuation of power by the ruling class and the perdurance of a socio-economic and political system that assures its reproduction: consumer capitalism. The internal space of the subject is colonized by definitions, meanings and desires that assure the reproduction of the reigning system of consumer capitalism. The determinant categorizations for the colonized subject are race and gender together with the appropriate definitions; the subjugation of this subject is guaranteed. (Puwar, 2004; Segato, 2018)

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Words and language are used in multifarious ways, shifting meaning from all kinds of *language games* (Wittgenstein, 1953). A word or sentence acquires meaning only when it is fixed to some context of use. Context is constructed by the hegemonic authority to legitimate its claim to epistemic superiority. Meanwhile, the colonized subjectivities of the marginalized are contextualized by genderized and racialized words imposed to them by the former.

Hence, the *plasticity of words* is shaped by a colonizing system of hegemonic power, signification and influence. Plasticity refers to a nature without a predetermined shape or function; it refers to a capacity for being moulded and altered, to the ability to morph without a preconceived end, thus, free of *a priori* judgement and determinism.

This *concept of plasticity* is different from the polysemy of words: the coexistence of many possible meanings of a world. Where the meanings emerges from the standard denotations and connotations suggested by the material shape of the a given word (Roudiez, 1982).

For this thesis, the *plasticity of words* is a determinant concept for reading with a *contrapuntal suspicion* (Said, 1993), the forms of epistemic legitimization of authoritative concepts as the vernacular. These are concepts that are utilized as applicable universal truths; as they are authorized and canonized by science they become *"dominant myths and overshadow everyday life"* (Poerksen, 1995, p. 4). Poerksen explains: when words move away from authoritative spheres like science and pass to the colloquialism of everyday language, words *"lose any potential for prediction, concreteness, or exactitude"* (Poerksen, 1995, p. 8). But here again, whose science is the legitimatizing authority? The sedimented universalism of science as the realm of rational and logical truth has been the subservient epistemic legitimizer of the power institutions of colonialism.

This authority imbued into science as the repository of *universal truth* has been used to legitimize racism and gendered differences as being inferior to the somatic norm of the universal white heteronormative patriarchy. This has been legitimized by European philosophy and science to be the nexus from where only *true intellect* can originate. The white heteronormative male body is defined by philosophy and science to be the only entity that can achieve the rational separation between body and mind; necessary for true intellect voided of stains from the subjective bodily functions of the organic and its connection to nature. Hence, he is the only one who can transcend earthly limitations of the body and achieved proper pure knowledge.

Women's bodies and dark bodies are seen as closer to nature and thus unable to disassociate themselves from passion and other emotions and abjections of the organic. (Schott, 1988; Puwar, 2004; Shiva, 1999; Segato, 2018).

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3.1.4. Contrapuntual reading.

The normative legitimizing authority of *universal truth and values* generated from the Eurocentric self-serving perspective of the proper ethics, morals and aesthetics of life is why all texts must be taken with a good measure of suspicion and distrust. Only by a *contrapuntal reading* (Said, 1993) can an effective set of decolonizing tactics emerge. C*ontrapuntal reading* is the practice Edward Said posited to interpret colonial texts, considering the perspectives of both the colonizer and the colonized. To interpret contrapuntally is to simultaneously analyse the historical and political perspectives from which the text was written. By whom and from whom it was written, and how these interactions play within the meaning of the text. Hence, taking into account both perspectives, from imperialism and the resistance to it.

In a curious turn of descriptive irony, even Martin Heidegger, who by all accounts reifies the colonizer's model of heteronormative patriarchal universal Eurocentric philosophy, said about language: *"man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man".* (Heidegger, 1971).

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3.1.5. Perception, the manifold problem.

Leif Finkel (1992, p. 393) wrote: *"We take the world largely for granted"*. Finkel posited that the way we come to perceive the world that surround us, and thus the way we conceive *reality, as we know it"* is the result of *"largely an internally generated construct of the nervous system".* Finkel's instrumentalist biology led him to conclude that, once this reality is *"constructed it is projected back onto the world through behavioral interactions with objects".* (Finkel, 1992, p. 393). Finkel's unquestioned dependency on the instrumentalization of the biological, "*the nervous system"*, in order to render a behavioural causality by *transitional objects* (Winnicott, 1951) underscores the rift between how we *"biologically"* perceive and how we socially construct reality.

Finkel presented that we need a cohesiveness between the perpetual and the real to make sense of our reality, for a *"triumph of the familiar, argues for an inherent order and coherence in our immediate universe"* (Finkel, ibid).

Marshall Sahlins argued that we construct our everyday lives in a perceptual relativism, on a world of complacency, conformity, convenience, familiarity and security (Sahlins, 2000). Our views of the world are subjective to perception and experience, even beyond any cultural conventions. The perceptual relativism of experience mediates our familiarities and structures; our *"immediate universe"* to the sense of certainty we posit on reality.

Arjun Appadurai adds that the dilemmas of perspective and representation, as well

as variations in the situation of the observer, may affect the process and product of representation (Appadurai, 1989, p. 48). The volatile condition of perspective, and thus the insecurity of representation, bring us to what Humberto Maturana and Francisco Verela present as the idea that *"we tend to live in a world of certainty, of un-doubted, rock-ribbed perceptions: our convictions prove that things are the way we see them and there is no alternative to what we hold as true. This is our daily situation, our cultural condition, our way of being human"* (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 18).

Maturana and Varela warn us *"not to fall in the temptation of certainty"*; if we as actors cannot *"suspend his – our – certainties"* nothing can be achieved as we are already *"embodied in his – our – experience as an effective understanding of the phenomenon of cognition"*, of the way things work in the world that we as spectators inhabit and as consumer use. Our experience of certainty is an *"individual phenomena blind to the cognitive acts of others"*, Maturana and Varela posit; but, taken from the solitude of the individual, this individual phenomenon *"is transcended only in a world created with others"* (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 18). These are the social structures of culture and tradition that we form to validate our own beliefs.

Maturana and Varela state that cognition is *"an effective action, an action that will enable a living being to continue its existence in a definite environment as it brings forth its world"* (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 30). Thus, we live in this world that we created to surround us, where our perceptions are entitled, only if we belong to the epistemic authority of the colonizer. As Merleau-Ponty wrote, *"all knowledge*

takes its place within the horizons opened up by perception" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.241). The authorized perception of epistemic truth comes from the colonizer: the ones with the agency to govern and institutionalized their ways of life and aesthetics, values and morals upon the subjugated other.

Merleau-Ponty wrote that *"since we can never fill up, in the picture of the world, that gap which it comes into existence for someone, since perception is the 'flaw'…"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 241). An agent of epistemic legitimacy and authority positions himself as a colonizing agent at the beginning of the ontological construction of experience and thus of legitimate reality. Where there is a cognitive blurring between perception and actual experience (Maturana and Varela, 1998) there is an erasure of perception, not as a science of the world but instead as a deliberate act. This is what Merleau-Ponty called *"the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xi).
In the condition of colonization of a territory, be it a land or mind, the position of reality is oppositional to what Merleau-Ponty argues to be the real: *"The real has to be described, not constructed or formed. Which means that I cannot put perception into the same category as the syntheses represented by judgements, acts or predications"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xi). Perception is another socially constructed instrument. As Finkel proposed, the nervous system might transmit signals from the senses to the brain. But it is our culturally constructed language of sings and symbols that interpret these signals as songs or only noise.
In the space of cognitive blurring between perception and actual experience that Maturana spoke of, Santiago Gómez-Barris saw perception as being the crucial nexus of constructing reality. Gómez-Barris saw an opportunity *"an invitation to*

reflection by opening a space of awareness" (Gómez-Barris, 2017, p. 9). This *"invitation"* has already been taken by the colonizer agents of real-estate speculation and political manipulators. From the space of blurriness, a categorizing institutionalized hierarchical social typology is created and imposed as social reality. The institutional bureaucracy of a territory's governing structures and the imaginary construct of a nation in the mind of the people who dwell in this territory. The state is not a single cohesive hegemonic power. It is an entity riddled with power asymmetric and cognitive contradictions. It is inhabited by an abundance of opposing actors, agents and users that constitute its ontological physiognomy. Merleau-Ponty wrote that *"all knowledge takes its place within the horizons opened up by perception"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 241). By this he proposes that perception comes before episteme. He continues: *"there can be no question of describing perception itself as one of the facts thrown up in the world"*. Merleau-Ponty's is a romantic sense of perception as an aura outside our body. He names it as a natural, indelible *"fact"* of being in the world. The poetic gesture where he pictures perception as the luxury of the colonizer who has the agency to metaphorize the instruments of colonization into his own romantic narration. How perception as fact is used to legitimize invasion, appropriation and expulsions of peoples from their own places. How it enables the construction of new places for the colonizer on top of the layers of history left behind by the displaced. *"Since we can never fill up, in the picture of the world, that gap which we ourselves are, and by which it comes into existence for someone, since perception is the 'flaw' in this 'great diamond"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 241). The *"gap"* he speaks of is left open only in poetry. Perception is the instrument, even in the "flaw" – in the perception of

the subaltern, that construct the "*great diamond",* that is the appropriation of place.

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3.2. Socio-spatial structures.

The social practices of artists and architects take form in space. What does space actually mean? The Scottish geographer Neil Smith (1984) argued that *"the concept of space tends to be taken for granted"* (Smith, 1984). The spaces where these practices locate their sites are commonly referred to as the places of marginalized communities' dwellings in informal settlements on occupied lands at the borderlands of cities. This almost automatic cognitive jump using space and place almost interchangeably is one of the perspective errors in artists' and architects' social practices. Space is commonly defined in design thinking as imagined Cartesian terrain of *terra-nullius*, whereas place is thought socially in terms of location of dwelling. Site is a grid on the map where space and place are hierarchically positioned as tectonic elements in the description of a location for work, intervention and change. The design-thinking methodology where space is described, place is thought, and site is constructed is a contrived structure that needs to be thought in terms of a trialectic instead of as a stable set of definitions. Almost thirty years ago Michael Keith and Steve Pile (1993) noted the attention generated by the *spatial turn* in the reintroduction of space and spatial relations by intellectual circles as foundations of modern capitalist society, which they referred to as the *"spatial vogue"* (Keith and Pile, 1993, p. 2). Nevertheless, the fashionable

attention given to spatial practices does not dilute the importance of a critical understanding of socio-spatial dialectics in capitalist societies, where space becomes a material product (Soja, 1989) and the ideological contends of socially created space (Soja, 1989, p. 76) is instrumentalized into the publicity of the market economy and nationalisms. Thus, the recognition of *"decisive and pre-eminent"* spatial structural forces embedded in modern capitalist societies (Harvey, 1973) is of paramount importance for the artist and architect's development of their socio-spatial practices and awareness of the conjuncture between *"how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life"* (Soja, 1989, p. 6). Hence, there follows a description of what space and place represent in the context of the artist and architect's socio-spatial practices in this thesis.

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3.2.1. Space.

Space cannot remain thought of as an empty, passive, abstract arena where things happen unrelated to the rest of human and environmental relationships (Keith and Pile, 1993). Lefèbvre described the sense of space as a political field:

> *"Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be 'purely' formal, the epitome of rational abstraction, it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and moulded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies"* (Lefèbvre, 1976, p. 31).

Lefèbvre is well known today by his famous dictum that *space is socially produced*. He argued that when space is considered in isolation from the politico-social, space remains an empty abstraction (Lefèbvre, 1991, p.12). Lefèbvre's critical approach to space as a social product is part of his theorization on the *Critique of Everyday Life* (1947). Here is where Lefèbvre asserted his point that under modern capitalism the conditions of work and production have become part of the everyday life. The conditions of capitalism have become our state of everydayness (Löw, 2008, p. 27).

Lefèbvre contents not only that space is socially produced, but also that space is politically controlled by capitalism's means of social and political appropriation. Lefèbvre explains that capitalism and the state simultaneously protect their structures of hegemonic power by regulating the access to the configurations of space. The traditional spatial conflictual binaries of private/public are ingrained into the *"social training"* of democracy (Pateman, 1970, p. 41). Lefèbvre described the conditions of hierarchy and functionality of the state and capitalism's management of space as: *"of 'boxes for living in', of identical 'plans' piled one on top of another or jammed next to one another in rows"* (Lefèbvre, 1991, p. 384). This is what Lefèbvre refers to as the *"abstract space" of capitalism* (Lefèbvre, 1991, p. 229).

Lefèbvre primarily followed the Marxist tradition when he developed his conceptual triad of space (Lefèbvre, 1991, p. 38) composed of *spatial practice*/perceived space, *representations of space*/conceived space, and *spaces of representation*, representational space/lived spaces. When Lefèbvre referred to *"spatial practice",* he related this to space-related modes of behaviour. This is to say that everyday practices and habits are created and shaped by the production and reproduction of

spatial localities; abstract, political, social and existential (Noeberg-Schulz, 1971). Lefèbvre's view of spatial practices, although it includes the aspect of action of the space upon the body as suffering and experience, remains very much under the impression of capitalist structural constraints (Löw, 2008).

In Lefèbvre's third part of his triad of space, he adds to this conception an agency of action/behaviour. Hence, *'spaces of representation'* stand for spaces of expression and cognition. In such "spaces" is where Lefèbvre places the role and agency of the artist.

The German sociologist Martina Löw (2008) argues that such *"theoretical considerations of space permits reflection on the ordering logics of simultaneity, space is subjected to analysis in the social sciences as a 'product of social action' or as a 'product of social structures'"* (Löw, 2008, p. 26). British social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (1999, 2005) on the other hand refers to space as a category suited to express the spheres of juxtaposition and coexistence. Space maintains a theoretical anonymity, and a universal image of neutrality, even as a product of social action. When space makes the cognitive jump from theory to experience, as action and performance, in history and in narrative, the intensity of experience transforms space into a place. Therefore, people actively transform their spaces, appropriating them by actions and intensity into their everyday life narrative of place.

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3.2.2. Place.

The American philosopher Edward Casey wrote that "*to exist is to exist in a place"* (Casey, 1997), given that place is a structurally dominant part of the very construction of what we determine is our *"world"*. The world as a representation of culture, nation, tribe, family and society. A *"world"* is defined by the Argentine feminist philosopher Maria Lugones (1987) as *"in my sense may be an actual society given its dominant culture's description and construction of life, including a construction of the relationships of production, of gender, race, etc"* (Lugones, 1987, p. 10). She adds that a *"world"* doesn't need to be the construction of a whole society, and that many *"worlds"* can be constructed of the same society as they remain different *"words"* in themselves. This idea of a *"world"* as place and experience of the social-spatial determinism of identity, belonging to non-hegemonic groups of non-conformist or transgressive ideologies, phenotypes, and sexuality, ethnicity is the social imaginary of cohesion, and the narrative historical determinism of place-making.

The appearance of cohesiveness is what holds together our representations of place. Casey saw people, as *emplaced beings*, where *"place is an a priori of our existence on earth"* (Casey, 1997, p. x). Place is a contested definition. Historically, notions of what determines place varies from cultures, to politics, to personal narratives. For Heidegger (1951), place was equated with *being* in a place, which meant for him as *"being-in-the-world".*(Heidegger, 1971).

Places are intrinsically diverse. Places are heterogeneous systems independent of geographic territory. Places are intersecting realms of amorphous and plastic

compositions and shapes. Some places claim territory as means to define themselves; other places exist in communal imaginaries of diaspora communities. Places are traditionally tied to communities but they are independent of a cohesive public. Places are transitory, mutable and recombinant. Places are determined by intensity, power and narration (Bhabha, 1990). Places are like history. Represented by the narrative of the victorious. History is a tool of the powerful, which dominates the narration and creates the language of the narration. Thus, places are visible and invisible depending on to whom these places belong. This is what Massey (1994) called the progressive sense of place. Massey said that places by their nature are progressive, never static; they might seem static and concrete, as history does, but this is just a temporal trick that lasts only as far as human memory last. Distortion is an inherent quality of the nature of humanity's narration and construction/deconstruction of themselves. Throughout their systems of classification and representation, aesthetics and hegemony, humanity constantly reproduces place. Hence, humanity relies on the construction of place, to validate their identity, culture and a sense of self.

In the 1970s, Edward Relph was arguing that in the modern homogenized world of 20th-century capitalism the *"sense of place"* has been largely lost and replaced with an *"inauthentic"* attitude. He argued that the loss of place diversity in the modern world was symptomatic of a larger loss of meaning. He alluded to the idea that the loss of traditional cultures that produced vernacular places was being replaced by a homogenized consumer culture that produces the sense of *"placeness".* Relph defined *"placeness"* as *"the casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes that results from an insensibility to the significance of*

place" (Relph, 1976, p. v). The French anthropologist Marc Augé later defined these *standardized landscapes* as *"non-places"* (1992), a series of homogenized architectures that define a sameness of behaviour, taste and aesthetics that envelop the modern consumer capitalist world. By this Relph meant the loss of the "authenticity". Relph's parochial idealism of place authenticity based on romantic images of pre-industrial societies falls into the same localism of authenticity that constituted in Heidegger an ontological fear of the *other*.

Heidegger's localism is related to what Massey argues as the persistent identification of 'place' with 'community'. In Heidegger's case this relates to the idea of pure-community. Massey posits that what gives place its particularity is not *"some long internalized history"* but instead its construction by *"a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus"* (Massey, 1994).

Relph argued that place is *experience-based*. Relph said that *"the unique quality of place was its power to order and to focus human intentions, experiences and actions spatially"* (Relph, 1976, p. 3).

When Relph defined people's identities, tied to the identity of and with place, he referred to the quality of such place as a *"persistent sameness and unity"*, two structuring disciplinary attributes. He continued by stating, *"Which allows that [place] to be differentiated from others"* (Relph, 1976, p. 45). The disciplinary and exclusive form of the definition that Relph gives to place is short-sighted as it limits place to stable categorizations of being. Nevertheless, Relph argued for an *"authentic sense of place"*. He thought there could be "*a direct and genuine*

experience of the entire complex of the identity of places", if only the harmful intrusions of *"mass communication, mass culture, and central authority"* could be eliminated from *"undermining of place for both individuals and cultures"*. He blamed modern technology and mass culture without a clear critique of modern consumer capitalism systemic colonization of everyday life. Thus, his critique of the loss of place remains reactionary, and stuck on binary moralism. The American writer and art critic Lucy Lippard wrote that *"More often place applies to our own 'local' intimacy"* (Lippard, 1997, p. 7), and thus place remains an intrinsic personal experience.

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Chapter 4. A crisis in art and architecture.

This chapter explores the social conditions that have contributed to what has been called a crisis in the social legitimacy of art and architecture practices (Mouffe, 2007; Awan, Schneider, and Till, 2011; Cruz, 2012; Miessen, 2016). It has been posited by many authors that art and architecture practices have been since the late 60s in a slow but constant decline of their social relevance as transformative capital of innovation and social engagement with the public. In reaction to this crisis, art and architecture practices have taken a “social turn” (Thompson, 2004; Bishop, 2006) towards designing practices that directly engage with the public as user and participant. Art and architecture practices since the early 90s have been in a process of re-contextualization of their disciplines away from the individual professional practice of the private studio and towards a more socially conscious, participatory and collaborative design thinking. The aim has been to gain social legitimacy, placing art and architecture practices as innovative and transformative instruments for social change. The chapter concludes by presenting how the social assemblages of culture and culturalism have influenced the social construction of art and architecture’s perceived socio-economic value.

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4.0. A crisis of legitimacy in art and architecture.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote in *The Social Contract* (1762) that *"Legitimacy rests on the general will of the people"* (Rousseau, 1997). The questions that must be clarified here are: *What is this general will?* And *Who are these people that are being spoken of?*

The *"general will"* is advertised as the meaning that the common people bestow upon their description of legitimacy. Meaning and legitimacy are thus tied together, even more in today's experience-driven economy (Pine II and Gilmore, 1998).

What a thing is to us is, in a Heideggerian sense, what that thing signifies within a framework of truth. Of this truth is what we have come to believe is legitimacy. Truth is nothing more than a structured perspective of meaning by the hegemonic power of the moment. In contemporary society the instruments of legitimacy are defined by their apparent publicness (Habermas, 1975). Advertising, participation and democracy are the media's favourite legitimizing instruments. The media, as a multifarious sinister organism, is the network of institutions that structure, manufacture, reproduce, and disseminate the ideological content of advertising, participation and democracy. The media produces the forms needed to create *"the general will"* of the people by whoever has the hegemonic power of the moment (Merrin, 2006; Lacy, 2009).

Contemporary consumer capitalism has produced a system of media publicity to archive a globalizing influence. It might have started by printing newspapers and advertising catalogues of the 19th-century European lifestyle. The selling point was, and still is, to achieve a universal homogenizing desire of a certain lifestyle and

values. Then, capitalism can provide all the *items of recognition* necessary to fulfil such desires, by continuing with the creation of meaning by the fabrication of need by the advertising media. The media and advertising are the instrument and the purpose wrapped together in the necessary order of priority according to the service to provide: meaning, legitimacy and consumption.

Nowadays the media is the hegemonic global instrument of legitimacy. Although it is far from the instrument that McLuhan spoke of in his 1960s dictum, *"the medium is the message"*. It is also beyond Baudrillard's own dictum of the 1980s, *"the medium is no longer identifiable as such…"* (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 30).

Global electronic media is ubiquitous in the everyday lives of *the people*. With the term *"the people"* I am alluding to the objects of democracy, most commonly called *the common people* in political propaganda. *The common people* is the transitional definition between the *proletariat* of early 20th-century Marxist class-struggle lore and the *precariat* of the neoliberalism of global consumer capitalism.

The common people is the romanticized definition that alludes to the image of provincial-rural inhabitants of the countryside; with the corresponding *"old time values"* of God-fearing goodness, purity, conformity, simplicity, truth, and humility. In contrast to the inhabitants of the city, these are the *"othered"*, the people who have been categorized not to belong to the normative majority, by phenotype or behaviour. They are seen as the different, threatening, deviant, ethnic, distrustful, foreign and strange. Hence, the media takes its place as the homogenizer of needs and desires.

The image displays the simplistic epistemic authority of the eyewitness. In the experience economy (Pine II and Gilmore, 1998), the truth of experience is seamlessly exchanged between witnessing as present action, and witnessing as consuming action, of an event from afar mediated through a screen. Therefore, today's media ubiquity and its constant individual "customized" consumption by the common people has had the transformative effect of turning our everyday life experience into our own personal consumption of our own *life on the screen* (Turkle, 1995).

In the era of the image, the legitimizing agency of the media is thus mediated by *"the art of seeing"*. Paul Virilio called it *"the pernicious industrialization of vision"* (Virilio, 1997, p. 89). This is the production of context, content and affect by images; the condition of our everyday lives mediated by images created outside us. Such is a life of *"perceptual disorder"*, where manufactured images serve as *"vehicles of experience".* Virilio argued that people in the hyper-consumption of life experience as images had *"lost our status as eyewitness of tangible reality once and for all"* (Virilio, 1997, p. 91). There is nothing to regulate the constant bombardment of images disguised as fact or knowledge, *"as mirrors of reality and sumptuous simulations of desire"*. (Virilio, 1997, p. 90). If there is not such a thing as *"ethics of common perception", then* people are the entrapped in *"a paradoxical blindness due to the overexposure of the visible"* (Virilio, 1997, p. 91). In the excess of the visible as experience, the video artist Gary Hill said: *"vision is no longer the possibility of seeing, but the impossibility of not seeing"* (Virilio, 1997, p. 90).

This condition leaves the people without any other agency to merely converse in the world as audience, or what Guy Debord called in 1967 "*consumers of spectacles"* (Debord, 1995). Thus, art's function is relegated to the service of the media's production of images for mass consumption, and architecture is still mediated by the same images designed by the media to portray the proper lifestyle.

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4.0.1. The emancipatory function of art.

In the romantic image of art, art is endowed with the *emancipatory function* of agency to the common people. Arnold Farr presented the idea that *"The freedom to think and reflect that is made possible at the level of culture makes it possible to construct values and ideals that pose a challenge to the social order"* (Farr, 2020). Farr called this the *emancipatory function of art.*

Marcuse argued that *"the cultural realm or civilization is characterized by intellectual work, leisure, non-operational thought, and freedom"* (Marcuse, 1965, p. 16). These freedoms are of course by-products of the bourgeois life of an educated upper class. Thus, the production of a cultural realm of civilization befalls onto the condition of the bourgeois as the educated and privileged class. Farr's argument of the emancipatory function of art as classless is naive. Farr's call "*to construct values and ideals that pose a challenge to the social order"* (Farr, 2020) is an exercise available only to members of the ruling social class, and only to those included at level of the mandate of the social hierarchy; women and people of colour are often left outside.

The legitimacy of art does not go much further than the ornate, and the production of representational object of social status for a privileged class.

It appears, then, that art's palliative function *"would be the social effect (function) of a work, which is the result of the coming together of stimuli inside the work and a sociologically definable public within an already existing institutional frame"* (Bürger, 1984, p. 87). This is about art as a reflexive practice. Art that functions only within an appropriately educated public, trained in the culture of the arts, and which is protected from the outside world by the architecture of the institutional frame.

Michel de Certeau posited: *"The masses rarely enter these gardens of art. But they are caught and collected in the nets of the media"* (De Certeau, 1984).

Thus, art's legitimacy befalls to the *"the social ineffectiveness of their own medium"* (Schulte-Sasse, 1984, p. xi).

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4.0.2. Art and architecture's turn to the social practices.

> *"An actor or institution experiences a crisis of legitimacy, it is argued, when the level of social recognition that its identity, interests, practices, norms, or procedures are rightful declines to the point where it must either adapt (by reconstituting or recalibrating the social bases of its legitimacy, or by investing more heavily in material practices of coercion or bribery) or face disempowerment"* (Reus-Smit, 2007).

Art's turn towards the realm of the social was to legitimize its practices by finding new meanings in the social wrongs of society. Thus, the artist could serve as the protagonist agent in righting the wrongs of society with the emancipatory agency as the function of art. Evolving from Walter Benjamin's call to artists to become the

revolutionary agents of change (Benjamin, 1968), Cuban artist Tania Bruguera engaged with undocumented immigrants with her work *Immigrant Movement International* (2011) in Queens, New York City. Though her work, Bruguera sought to bring attention and activism to immigration reform in the United States. Nevertheless, history shows us that "*art can both protest and protect the status quo"* (Schulte-Sasse, 1984, p. xxxv).

In the romantic idealisms of art and the avant-garde, *art and activism go hand in hand*. This is a popularized empiricism tenuously grounded on the romanticized mythology of the artist as a *"revolutionary"* agent of social change. Yet, *"in every act of Romanticism, small violences hide"* (Zambrana, 2019). Or at least the image of the artist is commercialized as fashionable rebel against a presumed status quo. Chela Sandoval (2008) called it "*artivism".* She posited that *"the term artivism is a hybrid neologism that signifies work created by individuals who see an organic relationship between art and activism"* (Sandoval and Latorre, 2008, p. 82). Moreover, there have always been doubts about how much agency the artist can actually enact over or against the structure of art institutions and on society at large.

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Architecture as the foundation of civilization is another presumed and popularized truth. The architect as the genius philosopher and designer of a better lifestyle is yet another common myth. The architect has had the presumed responsibility and labour to design society out of its social troubles. From Georges-Eugène Haussmann's renovation of Paris commissioned by Emperor Napoleon III in 1853, to Benito Mussolini's 1937 commission EUR citadel outside of Rome, to Lúcio

Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and Joaquim Cardozo's design of Brasilia in 1956, this responsibility has been entrusted to architecture and the architect by dictators, philosophers, governments, and states from Ancient Greek to the present.

However, the image of the architect as social saviour and designer of grand plans has been continually eroded since the presumed end of high modernism, and the discontinuity of totalitarian states. Nevertheless, the architect's expertise and social and political authority has been diminishing as other professions like engineering and urban planning are increasingly entering the terrain of what used to be the exclusive field of architecture. Hence, the necessity of the architect is being questioned. The question of whether or not it has become obsolete to be an architect nowadays is asked more and more frequently in academia and in professional circles (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011).

To confront this *crisis*, art and architecture turned to the social practices in search for a place where they could be functional again. Art and architecture needed a new field to reconstitute their legitimacy as constitutive functional and vital parts of contemporary society. The creation of new meanings for art and architecture's practices represented a new place where to reinvent art and architecture's social function.

The political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2007) asked whether artistic practices can still play a critical role in society. The Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena questioned the role of architecture in 2016: *"One of the biggest mistakes that architects make is that they tend to deal with problems that only interest other architects."* He added, *"The biggest challenge is to engage with the important non-architectural issues –*

poverty, pollution, congestion, segregation – and apply our specific knowledge. It's not enough to raise awareness. I want people to leave with more tools. We must share the challenges so we are aware of the coming battles" (Aravena, 2016). In this conciliatory statement, Aravena unknowingly presents the cognitive gaps of instrumentalist thinking, as he frames architecture's epistemic authority as a tool for social change. He may include art, together with architecture as its acolyte à la Barbara Kruger[24].

Art and architecture are rendered as legitimate practices, because both have been academized and instrumentalized as disciplines of Western true knowledge. As such they are "*themselves effects of historical concrete, dynamic relations of power"* (Grosz, 1993). Elizabeth Grosz argues that this is what Foucault, in *The Discourse on Language*, meant when he spoke of the division of knowledge into disciplines as the means for regulating and supervising knowledge. This is what power exerts over discourse. Hence, the use of the word *discipline* to describe and frame a *practice*. The action of legitimate authority is to discipline, and by this action, to safeguard the accepted epistemic framework of the hegemonic structure of power. These parameters are not static; these are constantly and dynamically repositioning themselves to the ever-mutating conditions of the present hegemonic discourse. The American historian Hayden White, paraphrasing Nietzsche, said that *"every discipline is constituted by what it forbids its practitioners to do"* (Jenkins, 1991).

[24] Barbara Kruger's humour see p. 92.

The art critic Hal Foster described contemporary art's condition in 2010 as paradoxical. In his critique of contemporary art, he argued that *"what is new is the sense that, in its very heterogeneity, much present practice seems to float free of historical determination, conceptual definition, and critical judgement"* (Foster, 2010, p. 1). This contrasts the cliché of *"spirit of artistic freedom"* that is continuously commodified as the social character of art.

The social function and the social image of the architect are very often conflated into one. On the other hand, the social function and the social image of the artist are very often paradoxical and antithetical. Both practices are not necessarily presented as conterminous. Art is *seen* as bohemian, visceral, free and unruly. Architecture is *understood* as formal, calculated, true and dependable. Civilizations around the earth have depended on architecture to legitimize their power by the construction of hard symbols of power to themselves, from pyramids, to temples, to churches and to parliaments, and corporate skyscrapers. Architecture has erected the monuments to last, and to reify *the history of the victorious* on stone, heat strengthened tempered glass and high tensile steel.

The marketable image of the artist has resided within the theology of originality and the myth of the autonomy of art. Originality was an index of integrity in the arts (Kaprow, 1993). *"Traditionally, the artist-genius, creator of the masterpiece, was the analogue of God the father, creator of life. One artist, one original; one God, one existence. But today there are countless artists and reproductions, countless gods and cosmologies. When 'the one' is replaced by 'the many', reality may be*

perceived as a menu of illusions, transformable and replenish able according to need" (Kaprow, 1993, p. 145).

Once, it was thought that this dogma could be taken away by mass reproduction (Benjamin, 1968). What is left is probably that art remains there to give a kind of social panache to the rituals of high culture. As Barbara Kruger once said:

> *"If architecture is a slab of meat, then so-called public art is a piece of garnish lying next to it"* (Mitchell, 1991).

The artist Allan Kaprow in his essay 'The Education of the Un-Artist' (1974) argued that the art world had lost its audience: *"Its sole audience is a roster of the creative and performing professions, watching itself, as if in a mirror…"* The art world has lost its audience to what Martha Rosler refers to as *"the far more interesting perceptual effects of everyday life"* (Rosler, 1987, p. 9). Thus, everyday life *"ties to the 'real' world, rather than the art world"* (Kaprow, 1993, p. 131); and, as Kaprow concludes, *"non-art is more than art-art"* (Rosler, 1987, p. 10).

Kaprow was reflecting the ethos of the 1970s in the culture society in the United States, a reality for only a small section of the population that belonged to the elite group of academically educated white middle and upper class. Nevertheless, the attitude of the epoch was that art and architecture had lost its legitimacy and should regain it only by working collectively and on the social field, moving away from the elitist individualistic models of the artist-genius-creator. The call was for art and architecture to engage with the 'real' common people and be an instrument of social change away from what was already the coming of the globalized consumer capitalism's structural transformation of society.

This was the anti-institutional ethos expressed in the 70s art world, even if only by a small vanguardist section of the fine arts and architecture. This mode of thought was not restricted to Anglo-European sphere of art; it was actually more politicized in the conceptualist avant-garde of the Latin American art scene in South America (Camnitzer, 2007).

The German conceptual artist Joseph Beuys had already, paradoxically, ruined the exclusiveness of the modernist artist aura of originality, by claiming in 1973 that *'Every man is an artist'.* In exemplary white heteronormative patriarchal privilege, Beuys did not even hint at what he meant by *"man"*; for him, the assumption of whose body should exemplify the universal somatic norm of the artist was clear.

Beuys explained what this meant: *"Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline: to dismantle in order to build A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART. This most modern art discipline – Social Sculpture/Social Architecture – will only reach fruition when every living person becomes a creator, a sculptor, or architect of the social organism."* (Gallery label, November 2015, TATE Modern. UK.)

Paradoxically, even as he was stating the crumbling of the institution of the original artist-genius-creator, simultaneously he was reifying himself as such. He was claiming the bestowal of the crown by negating it. Whilst he appeared to be the great emancipator between the elitism of the art and the popular masses of the common *"man"*, Beuys was crowning himself to be the heir apparent of the new art form. He created a whole new reconstruction around himself shrouded on an

eclectic mysticism of cultural appropriations, where he presented himself as a kind of teacher, oracle, hero and messiah.

This is what Harold Rosenberg foretold in 1964, when he referred to an inherit narcissism of the artist as creator in his book *The Anxious Object: Art Today and its Audience.* Rosenberg presented that there is a shift in the art world away from the created art object to the artist as creation.

Beuys's actions were well received by the art world. The institutions of art needed a new product to reproduce their social capital; hence the new practices of politically conscious discourse and socially engaged arts were to be commodified as the new product of art. Art as well as architecture had been accused of elitism and being reflexive practices, *" in the safety-blanket of self-reflexive language that architecture wrapped itself in since the Renaissance"* (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011), its accessibility open only to a cultured audience – the only audience that could possibly understand the intertextualities of these practices. These new developments opened a new franchise of arts populisms for the institutions of art.

There is nothing surprising in this, since art and architecture, in their modernist permutation as social practices, had been entrusted with the roles of propaganda, art-branding, and art-washing on the service of the state and private interests.

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4.0.3. Art and architecture's *"service"* and *"accessibility"*.

The question of the function of art and architecture has been at times been framed as a question of *"service"* and *"accessibility"*. The emancipatory image of an inclusive society is one where all people can have *"access"* to good art, design and architecture. These have come to be publicized by the state as inherited social goods in which everyone in capitalist society should have *"participation"*. Art and architecture are portrayed in this social economy as *service practices* to this "participatory" ethos of the *democratization of everything*.

Hal Foster mentions that the sociologist Ulrich Beck *"has argued that modernity has become reflexive, concerned to retool its own infrastructure"* (Foster, 2011, p. ix). The infrastructure of meanings and values is where art and architecture's functions are being *"retooled"*.

Within this modern construction of consumer capitalism, art and architecture remain structurally placed as only accessible to the few bourgeois classes. Hal Foster argued that *"the pretense that the cultural is separated from the economic is finished"* (Foster, 2011, p. ix). Nevertheless, the *democratization* of access is only apparent.

The Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck was quoted in the mid-l960s as stating the following: "*we know nothing of vast multiplicity-we cannot come to grips with it-not as architects, planners or anybody else. . . [But] if society has no form – how can architects build it counter form?*" (Frampton, 1980, pp. 276–77). His preoccupation came as a result of the social function that governments had bestowed upon architecture during the past century, when modernist doctrine assumed the

solutions of the modern crisis of industrial capitalism could be solved by the advance of urban planning and architecture as the solutions to urban decay. Van Eyck affirmed his disbelief that "*society has no form"*, and he argued that architecture remained a significant endeavor in the reinvention of society. James Holston agreed that architecture deserves such function: *"I want to argue that one of the most urgent problems in planning and architectural theory today is the need to develop a different social imagination – one that is not modernist but that nevertheless reinvents modernism's activist commitments to the invention of society and to the construction of the state"* (Holston, 1998).

Holston brought into the discussions on the social function of architecture a paradigm of reinvention in theory and practice. He called these new forms of reinvention the *spaces of insurgent citizenship* or *insurgent spaces of citizenship* (Holston, 1998 p. 157). Holston's reference of *insurgent* meant the relationship of *opposition* that he observed inscribed into the spaces of citizenship (agency) countering the modernist spaces that physically dominate the cities of today. By this Holston proposed a new source of legitimization, away from the institutionalized constructions of the state. These notions of the concept of *spaces of insurgent citizenship* that Holsten theorized in the mid-90s can be seen in practice as reformulations of agency and land appropriation in the tactics of self-management in community movements at work in many marginalized communities in Latin America.

Holston also presented in his theorizations on *spaces of insurgent citizenship* an interesting observation in how he saw the situational awareness of the site, as one

of *"to hunt for situations that engage, in practice, the problematic nature of belonging to society and that embody such problems as narratives about the city"* (Holston, 1998, p. 173). His perception of *"to hunt for"* has been appropriated by art and architecture social practices as a De Certeau-esque "to poach for" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 174). That is, the opportunistic habit of artists and architects finding sites of social struggle to use as sites for their practice.

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4.0.4. Meaning and purpose.

Art and architecture have been going through a crisis of meaning and purpose for the past few decades. As a result of this crisis the art-architecture connection appears today as relevant only *"to attract business and to brand cities"* (Foster, 2011). The banality implied in such association draws the pessimistic question: what remains as the instrumental place of art and architecture in contemporary society today? Or, has art and architecture had just become the proverbial *"decorated duck"*[25] (Foster, 2011).

Architecture's practice is circumscribed by much more instrumental demands than art's practice is. Architecture as a practice is determined and bounded by the

[25] The decorated duck: Hal Foster. *The Art and Architecture Complex.* This is a funny take on Venturi, Brown and Izenour's *formal duck* and *decorated shed* critique from *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972). Hal constructs a composite of both concepts to: "combine the wilful monumentality of modern architecture with the faux-populistic iconicity of postmodern design" (Foster, 2011, p. 15).

shortcomings of the short-term priorities of clients and the market (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). Art, on the other hand, appears to be free from the social and market responsibilities that are socially coerced and politically imposed upon architecture.

Architecture lost its social primacy with the end of the modernist doctrine. Modernism's master plans signalled architecture and urban planning as the instruments for social change and design source for the solutions to the urban questions and the social problems caused by an advancing industrial capitalism (Holston, 1998).

Art lost its place at the vanguard of aesthetic revolution to publicity; and its idealist independence of the creative self to the homogenizing practices of fashion and to the commodification of the art object. Have both practices become only legitimizing vehicles for the new practices of globalized consumer capitalism and the ideologies of neoliberalism?

Throughout the processes of transition from an industrialized capitalism to a globalized electronic capitalism (Spivak, 2012), consumer capitalism continues to be defined by its extractivist practices and consumption before production (Gago, 2017). The rise of globalized consumer capitalism driven and disseminated by the time-space compression of globalizing media of Information Technology and Communication (ITC) (Castell, 2005; Sassen, 2006) has appropriated art's aesthetic vanguard and autonomy as commodities. It has appropriated them as instruments of production for the objects and experiences for an *aesthetic of mass consumption.* From the invention of marketable items of social recognition and desire, to the validation of taste and class that belong to the *global homogenizing*

menu of choice of identity branding and the *artialization* (Roger, 1997) of the natural landscape as a consumable product of our everyday experience, art has remained a good site of extraction for capitalism's interests.

Art and architecture as disciplines encountered a crisis of social meaning and purpose. But it was clear that the crisis included a more profoundly dialectical crisis between the *commodity value* and *social value* of both disciplines. A crisis of meaning and purpose became quite quickly a crisis for legitimacy. As the commodity value of the experience of art and architecture became trivialized and packaged for consumption as cultural tourism, political branding, social pacification, art-washing, and urban renewal, thus they became at the service of and agent to the politics of urban renaissance, gentrification and expulsion (Deutsche and Gentel, 1984).

Ironically, in the *experience economy* (Pine II and Gilmore, 1998) of globalized consumer capitalism, where object-hood, desire and experience have been designed to be marketable subjects with a very short shelf life, art and architecture have become the most excellent social containers and brand value.

Both disciplines have always cultivated and exuded the mythology of *the author*, as a consequence of *originality* of the *artist martyr* and the *architect genius*. Both practices share a kind of the elitist facade as exercises in bourgeois privilege and good taste. The social critique of art and architecture very often arises from such distinctions of both disciplines being accused of being conceptually detached from the "real" life and contextually as being disassociated from the everyday life experience of the common people. Art and architecture as reflexive practices

necessitate an intertextual aesthetic in order to properly understand their discourses and forms, hence the elitist nature of the disciplines.

Art and architecture as reflexive practices legitimized themselves by the fabrication of their own narratives, histories and myths. Both require – and have an ontological need to design and construct – the hard signs of their own legitimizing narratives in the forms of museums, galleries, churches and skyscrapers. These are the hard signs of the architecture of power that unequivocally legitimate their narratives into history.

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4.0.5. Practising 'otherwise', critical feminist architectures.

Dolores Hayden (1980) started her article, What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like? Quoting the chauvinist dogma "a woman's place is in the home" (Hayden, 1908, p. 170). Hayden argued the patriarchal shortsighted attitude has been ingrained in the core principles of architectural design and urban planning in the United States. (Hayden, 1980). The chauvinist frame of mind embodies an epistemology of oppression and silence against women and other peoples of color. This frame of mind signals the locus of the problem this thesis argues as the foundation of a crisis in art and architecture's practice and pedagogy. The thesis also posits an ongoing crisis of the traditional social legitimacy and positioning of architecture in western societies.

Architecture has been portrayed as a conservative discipline and practice (Ghirardo, 1984; Frichot, 2018). This position has not been necessarily a negative one for architecture. For a long time, conservatism in architecture was a relevant issue

securing tradition, culture and the instrumentalism of civilized societies over assumed lesser cultures and peoples. Architecture's conservatism reified the built environment to the image of white-man's epistemic hegemony.

The American historian Hayden White argued, "Every discipline is constituted by what it forbids its practitioners to do." (White, 1984, p. 220). What this argument means to architecture and art is that it places its practitioners within a paradoxical milieu between agency as expert professional oppositional to the role of socio-spatial agent. This would be a kind of Tafurian paradox, between accepting being part of a conservative discipline, instrumentalized epistemology and professionalism "form without utopia" while simultaneously claiming a kind of insurgent attitude as a socio-spatial agent "sublime uselessness" (Tafuri, 1976; ix). Elizabeth Grosz (1992) had argued "the body to be regarded as the locus and site of inscription for specific modes of subjectivity." (Grosz,1992, p. 241). Whereby the body of the architect remains inscribed within the discipline of architecture while an array of subjectivities remains in construction in architectural practice. Léopold Lambert described architecture as "the discipline that organizes bodies in space." (Lambert, 2019, p. 14). Whose bodies was Lambert referring to? The gendered body or the universal epistemological body of the architect –white's man body?

Diane Ghirardo (1984) argued architecture has retreated from social engagement and sought refuge in formalism. Ghirardo questions why architecture tries to remain "pure", instead of responding to what Friedrich Engels in his essay The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844 (Engels, 1973) had asserted as the conditions and effects of capitalism on society and the built environment; "the relationships

between political intentions, social realities and building." (Ghirardo, 1984; 387). This condition Ghirardo calls architecture's abdication of responsibility. Ghirardo posits architecture is presented as service practice and as a consumer commodity, economically dependent to the client and thus conservative in inclination.

Ghirardo asks, "Can one build while critical of the power structures that support building activity?" (Nesbitt, 1996;385).

Ghirardo's question remains circumvented while architecture's practice and pedagogy continues epistemological silencing of other voices coming from women and people of color. Architecture's silencing, colonialist and extractivist attitudes regarding the site and its populations has become symptomatic of an architectural exhaustion and thus in need of an urgent reorientation (Frichot, 2019).

Alberto Altés Arlandis (2018) argues that architecture has lost its social relevance. He adds, if architecture is to "become socially relevant again" (Altés Arlandis, 2018, p. 275) then, there is a dire need to create new forms of "responsible practices" (Medina, 2013; Altés Arlandis, 2018). How then it is for this project to deconstruct an exhausted discipline? The architect Meike Schalk (2007) argues that a start should be deconstructing "the myth of the artist-architect whose authority is based on professional judgment and authorship" (Schalk, 2007, p. 165). To this Ghirardo (1984) had argued, when standards of judgment are reduced to mere categories of "formal resolution", "integration", and "authenticity", architecture's disciplinary structure is reduced to judgment based purely as "matter of taste" (Ghirardo, 1984). Taste is camouflaged as objective professionalism. Objectivism has been instrumentalized by the patriarchal epistemic hegemony to separate reason and

pure knowledge away from women and people of color, thus silencing their voices and impeding their contributions to knowledge (Schott, 1988).

Objectivism from Socrates, to Plato and Aristotle up to Kant and continental philosophy has been instrumentalized as the tool of preference to claim ontological purity of thought, rational control and true knowledge. Thereby claiming white men as the locus of pure rational thought absent from the impurities of the flesh, sensuality and emotion, which cloud rationality from women and people of color. This epistemological canonization has relegated women and people of color to subaltern categories of hysterics, sexuality and unabridged emotions, which contaminate their capacity for rational thought (Schott, 1988; Shiva, 1993; Puwar, 2004).

Continental philosophy fetishism of true objectivity coming from the unmark category of white men (Haraway, 1988) has been the locus of epistemic hegemony. Kantian objectivity have been assimilated in Euro-American culture beyond a theory of knowledge, instead it has been absorbed into a foundational pillar of social practice (Schott, 1988).

Thus, to dare question the politics of knowledge and go beyond the trivial issues of fashion, taste, building laws, and the myth of the artist-architect only then Diane Ghirardo (1984) argued, can we approach the possibility of what she calls an architecture of substance.

Elizabeth Grosz in her book Architecture from the Outside posits the question; Can architecture construct a better future? (Grosz, 2001, p. 137). As long as architecture remains grounded in the spatial alone, the possibilities of finding a relevant place in

the social, beyond the meaningless consumable artifact of capitalist logic are very much diminished.

Architect Meike Schalk argues, architecture has been dependent and subjugated to the changing conditions of the market. This dependency has molded the practice of architecture and the architect's agency. (Schalk, 2018). Schalk believes that architects still have a role to play in society beyond the technological functionalisms and its fashionable aesthetisms. Schalk claims that architects can in "their critical and creative capacity to envision projections of alternative futures." (Schalk, 2018; 213). Nevertheless, the architect's agency would always remain a limiting factor in imagining alternative futures.

The sociologist Sharon Hays (1994) argued against the simplistic idea of agency, as a form of freedom. Hays presented agency as being always constrained, and shaped to the structure of society. Whereby, the choices any agent makes are always dependent and confined within "the realm of the structurally provided possibilities" of society, culture and traditions (Hays, 1994, p. 64).

The social structure is what constitutes the disciplinary limits and the field of practice. To move beyond its own agency the architect require a re-politicization (Ghirardo, 1984) towards becoming a social critically engaged individual (Raunig, 2009) who could then become an agent of social change. Ghirardo calls this individual "the insurgent architect" (Ghirardo, 1994, p. 64).

The idea of insurgency in architecture has been defined as a way for the architect/spatial practitioner to delink from the formalism of architectural dogma and to create counter hegemonic spatial practices. It requires of the spatial practitioner to reengage with the socio-political realities of the site and its

population. Thereby the insurgent spatial practitioner creates new ways of exploring existing urban practices, constructs new ways of encounter and engagement, and argues for alternative forms of critical and insurgent forms of citizenship (Holston, 1998), towards constructing innovative architectural and spatial practices for life in common. Insurgency in architecture defines a position where the political remerges as an immanent practice within the production of urban space (Harvey, 2000; Miraftab, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2016; Schalk, 2018).

Alternatives to the crisis of architecture come from among an engaged group of feminist architects, practitioners and theorists. These new actors bring different kinds of insurgent practices challenging the disciplinary shortsighted traditional patriarchal ideals and pedagogies that have limited architecture. Architecture has remained within a paradoxical relationship between “the artistic character of architecture in one hand and its obligations to produce technically sound and socially functional environments on the other” (Swyngedouw, 2016, p. 54). Feminist architects and theorists reconcile these paradoxical positions in architecture between art, dwelling and the social with transgressive critical thinking and practices since the early 80s.

The philosopher and feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz theorizations on “situated knowledges” (1988), and “Knowing and doing otherwise” (1999). Doina Petrescu’s ideas on “practising ‘otherwise’,” (2007), and the imagining of “other worlds” (Lugones,1987; Petrescu, 2007; Mouffe, 2013) have been the initiators of some of the key ideas this thesis had followed.

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The following feminist architects, theorists and practitioners have had the primary influence of opening worlds, ways to think about, dynamically, differently and "becoming different, about change" (Petrescu, 2007) not only about architecture rather expanded towards challenging issues of power, agency, identity politics and the politics of location. (Braidotti, 1994).

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Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative. 1980-94 London, UK.

One of the influential practices developed by Matrix was the architect as 'spatial agent'. In this role, the architect stood down from its role as expert professional and embodied social roles as activist, professional adviser and collaborator (Dwyers & Thorne, 2007). In such a role, the architect using her professional agency empowered women's groups and individual women with professional advice together with communal organizing skills that allowed them to take control of their own environment (Matrix, 1984). This kind of social empowerment practice of the 'spatial agent' inspired this thesis to use the name *socio-spatial agent* to specify the role of artists and architects who chose to work with marginalized and disfranchised communities.

Matrix's work was centered on challenging the socio-political context where women are restricted within the built environment and excluded from designing the built environment. Other ideas Matrix developed that have been important issues for the thesis were the position of marginality allocated to women in the creation of the built environment. Matrix argued, the built environment is bias towards the white male section of society as it is designed following a patriarchal set of sedimented

ideas which promote power asymmetries between, who has agency and who has not (Matrix,1984). Another fundamental guiding principle in Matrix's work has been the context of "situated knowledges" (Grosz, 1988) regarding women distinct experience and knowledge of the built environment usually ignored by the male-led profession of architecture and urban planning. Matrix argued this case bringing forth the idea that "because women are brought up differently in our society, we have different experiences and needs in relation to the built environment" (Dwyer & Thorne, 2007, p. 45). Whereby Matrix sought to develop participatory design methods more accessible to the everyday layperson not only to the traditional client-based audience of architecture. Matrix's overall contribution was to teach us to look critically at how the built environment is thought, designed and the socio-political implications spatial practices have on maintaining women and people of color in subaltern and marginalized conditions.

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Doina Petrescu.

Architect Doina Petrescu brought forward influential concepts challenging preconceived ideas on agency and practice in architecture. The concept of "altering practices" (2007), Petrescu argued could mean "undermining", "subverting" the whole gamut of what she posits as "received identities, rules, norms and tools" (Petrescu, 2007, p. 3) derived and conditional to patriarchal hegemonic epistemic positions. Petrescu presents altering practices as an "affirmation of difference" a dynamic method to work around and against preconditioned meanings and practices in everyday life. Altering is a reflexive and situated approach to practice, a

process of “making different, about change” and subverting and reframing identity constructions (Butler, 1990).

Petrescu (2005) presented a critique on participatory practices in architecture centered on the argument, “process is more important than the result.” (Petrescu, 2005, p. 46). Whereby “the architect should accept losing control. Rather than being a master, the architect should understand himself/herself as one of the participants.” (Petrescu**,** 2005, p. 58). This implies a very different positioning away from the usual “designer-hubris problem” (Willis, 2015, p. 6) promoted by traditional patriarchal design pedagogy. This critique presents a way for the architect and spatial agents and practitioners for delinking from the traditional professionalization of practice towards an open practice with “the agency of letting go”, (Kossak, F; et al, 2009, p. 11). Thereby following this process of ‘alterity’ the architect and spatial agents can openly confront a self-reflexive evaluation of their epistemic assumptions and prejudices about our social environment, our relations and our everyday encounters in the world (Kossak, F; et al, 2009).
The potential of altering practices presents the architect and spatial agents with a liberating agency from egotistical traditional professional practice, opening the possibility of an “architecture on behalf of others and with others” (Kossak, et al, 2009, p. 17). Thus, the architect and spatial agents are free to explore the multiplicity of voices, spaces of social encounter and economic exchange, that are part of the local communities where they intent to intervene.

Petrescu (2009) argued, to intervene also always means interposing, intercepting and often interfering. (Kossak, F; et al, 2009, p. 6). Nevertheless, the architect and

spatial agent's responsibility is to contextualized their agency within the local political and ethical meaning, remaining aware of their influence and how their intervention will affect the course of the everyday lives of the people where they have chosen to 'step in'.

Another important concept Doina Petrescu (2007) develops is "the logic of *becoming*". Petrescu posits '*becoming*' as the potential for a dynamic practice in "perpetual change". A practice which remains open to change and new positions. This logic of becoming presents the alternative for a practice that adapts to, and reclaims sustainable futures with long-term perspectives. (Petrescu, 2007).

Petrescu presents us with a preoccupation on architecture's "uncertain future" (Kossak, F; et al, 2009, p. 10). She posits that architecture needs to transform and re-evaluate its social function, what she calls architecture's commitment to society. Petrescu argues the discipline of architecture have been "crowed out" by the changes in global market economy and the market crash of 2006. She argues that architecture needs to change in order not only to survive as an economically viable profession, but even more importantly on how architecture will be able to respond to the rapid global environmental changes happening right now.

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Hélène Frichot.

The architectural theorist and philosopher Hélène Frichot argues, "Because architecture is a conservative discipline…" (2018, p. 275), architecture is confronted with a series of obsolescence in its practice and design thinking. Frichot posits that architecture as a masculinist discipline is therefore constrained by and limited to

conservative biases, which keep the practice in “the suspicion that all we are left with is more of the same, practiced perpetually through serial permutations.” (Frichot, 2018, p. 268). Starting with but not limited to “the obsolescence of man-form” (Frichot, 2018, p. 269), a pillar of practice is more preoccupied with perpetuating the status quo rather than representing and evolving with the changes in society.

Hélène Frichot and Stephen Loo (2013) had alluded to architecture’s exhaustion when they posed the question; has architectural thinking *exhausted* Deleuzian philosophy? Nevertheless, the large question remains if the whole of the practice and its pedagogy are in fact exhausted beyond any particular philosophy. Exhausted means that architecture as a discipline is unable to offer solutions to the large problems of society beyond the status quo of design, habitation and the politics of planning and urbanization. (Frichot & Loo, 2013).

Nevertheless, Hélène Frichot positively argues that architecture has a renewed interest and investments in the social and the politics of space, which in this case feels more as an obligated and desperate survival strategy of the discipline, rather than an actual change in the epistemological legitimation of architecture. Frichot frames architecture’s exhaustion on the patriarchal impossibility to innovate with dynamic solutions for a worldwide-connected society, which continually transforms faster that the discipline of architecture can. Nevertheless, Frichot posits that architecture is confronting it obsolescence in the face of an increasing critique of the patriarchal hegemony and with new understandings of obsolescence of the man-form to bring creative solutions to an increasingly fragile world system (Frichot, 2018). Moreover, Frichot presents the concept of a woman-form, which entails “a

promise to future work" (Frichot, 2013, p. 88). Following Isabelle Stengers (2005) intriguing questioning of what is a practice to be, Stengers argues "we do not know what a practice is able to become; what we know instead is that the very way we define, or address, a practice is part of the surroundings which produces its ethos." (Stengers, 2005, p. 195).

Frichot sees an opportunity in novel feminist practices to renew architecture's future (Frichot, 2018). Frichot presents a series of transformative ideas within the context of what she calls, feminist architectural creative ecologies of practice (2019). Following some of the ideas presented in Bateson's ecology of mind (2000), Frichot brings the idea of an ethics of encounter (2019) as related to her concept of ecologies of creative practices as an alternative to counterbalance the masculine ethos in architecture. Ethics of encounter (Frichot, 2019a, p. 10) represents an approach to site and practice with an ethic-aesthetic 'test-sites' approach (Brünner, 2015), where the practitioner understands that we learn through the generosity of exchanging and sharing "concept-tools" and encounters with others (Frichot, 2019a, p.165). This concept is related to Altés Arlantis (2018) proposition for 'aesthetics of encounter'. Where Altés argues that our learning processes "require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations." (Altés Arlantis, 2018, p. 275). Both propositions follow Donna Haraway's (2016) situated knowledges ideas where "we become-with each other or not at all." (Haraway, 2016, p.4).

Frichot argues architecture needs to dispose of the hero/genius figures that dominate architecture's mythology. Also, it needs to deconstruct what Meike Schalk (2007) argues is the myth of the artist-architect as the figure of hegemonic epistemic agency. Otherwise, architecture remains unable to reinvent itself beyond

its deeply conservative biases, masculinist ego and conformity to a decrepit status quo. (Frichot, 2018; 268).

Frichot frames her strategies to deconstruct architecture's masculinist lethargy utilizing Guilles Deleuze's statement, "there is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons." (Deleuze, 1995, p. 178). Frichot finds "new weapons" to deconstruct the discipline of architecture in an interesting insurgent concept of an indiscipline approach[26] (Frichot, 2018). Indiscipline is framed as a "transgressive challenge" to architecture "that unsettles its conservative inclinations" (Frichot, 2018, p. 277). The cognitive challenge to architectural epistemology Frichot presents is Dirty Theory (2019b). The argument Frichot posits is one of the most interesting and far-reaching concepts to counteract the idiocy of Kantian objectivism as a fundamental pillar of western academic thought. Kantian objectivism represents the a priori epistemic canon that dominates the discourses of continental philosophy. Kantian objectivism follows Anglo-Saxon epistemology based on purity of reason embodied only in the white male (Schott, 1988). Against this dogma of purity and reason, the fear of the emotional, the sensual and the sexual[27] which has dominated the epistemology of aesthetics situating women to subservient positions of epistemic dependency. Frichot answers, "Pure reason must be muddied." (Frichot, 2019b; 8). Dirty theory could be a decolonizing tool for a practice too much preoccupied with its own legitimacy that it fails to avert its own

[26] Frichot quotes indiscipline as a concept being explored in the works of Jasmin Dücker. (2016).
[27] See Kant's biographical account referring to his sexual abstinence and emotional contempt. (Schott, 1988).

obsolescence. Meanwhile, architecture is dismissing new creative possibilities beyond the mere aesthetic play between ‘ducks’ and ‘decorated sheds.’ (Venturi, et al,1972).

Frichot posits, “The mythical island of reason has disappeared into the mist.” Thus, indiscipline remains as a counter method for a practice of architecture in need to reinvent its social function towards a practice where care, repair and maintenance are more important that heroics of ego and stardom.

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Meike Schalk.

The architect and urban theorist Meike Schalk has contributed to the field of architecture with interesting and challenging concepts on critical participation, insurgency and urban curating. These are strategies and at times responsive tactics to transform and open up the discipline of architecture to innovative forms of practice that challenge architecture’s the status quo of masculinist epistemology and practices. Schalk’s research explores gender, diversity and inclusion in architecture’s design practice and pedagogy. Schalk follows a critical inquiry approach engaging with discourses of democracy, participation and sustainability as key objectives for developing a socially engaged practices in architecture. Schalk (2017) posits throughout her work the idea of “making visible” as a feminist tactic to reclaim women’s positions “rendered invisible” by a patriarchal society. The lack of representation of women’s work and experiences as genuine

contributions to knowledge is presented as the critical site of contestation in architectural practic. (Reisinger & Schalk, 2017). Invisibility and lack of representation are part of the epistemic injustices of silencing and prejudice (Fricker, 2007; Medida, 2013) this thesis argues are the locus of marginalization and disfranchisement in poor and migrant populations in informal settlements. (Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies, 1999; Gago, 2017). Schalk, Kristiansson and Mazé (2017) posit, “becoming” as a viable “new positions from which to reclaim sustainable futures with long-term perspectives. (Reisinger & Schalk, 2017, p. 2). Thereby, “becoming” could be used as a tactic of appropriation of space in informal settlements, thus transforming what the state, private owners and land speculators deem ‘illegal land invasions’ into sustainable places for community growth.

Another area of architectural and planning practice Meike Schalk confronts with a smart keen critique is the ubiquitous moniker included in most planning and architectural proposals, participation. Schalk presents participation in the traditional context of the institutionally governed planning process as prescribed tokenism (Schalk, et al, 2018). On the other hand, Schalk proposes a “critical participation” to challenge the scripted planning process using an array of tactics from social media, interventionist practices and performative methods (Schalk, et al, 2018, p. 299).

The proposed alternatives to traditional scripted models of participation in planning and architecture are to “broadening the circle”. The circle is the hierarchy of usual experts and professionals’ agents representing the institution vis-a-vis the state and private corporative interest. Critical participation calls for the inclusion of “engaged citizens” with the hope of “repoliticizing the discourse on possible urban futures.”

(Schalk, et al, 2018, p. 299). This type of participation is often uninvited and requires the desire to participate. Also, critical participation aims to produces social relations between the institutions and the “insurgent architects” (Schalk, et al, 2018). Schalk relates this concept to Chantal Mouffe’s critical artistic practices (Mouffe, 2007) and frames critical participation as an *instituent practice* (Raunig, 2009). Schalk utilizes Gerald Raunig’s concept of *instituent practice* as a strategy towards promoting a criticism of the institution without leaving the institution. Raunig (2009) explains it as an “exodus from institutionalism without escape; that is, neither rejecting institutions nor serving them but challenging and transforming them.” (Schalk, et al, 2018, p. 302).

Insurgency is a concept Meike Schalk utilizes to define transgressive, counter hegemonic practices that counteracts the legitimacy of the status quo. The insurgent architect embodies and instrumentalizes this concept into an ethos. Schalk summarizes the American sociologist David Harvey’s (2000) definition of the insurgent architect as a “metaphor that portray an individual with the desire for transformative action who thinks strategically and tactically about her tools and collaborations.” (Schalk, et al, 2018, p. 300).

Insurgency has been used to define many concepts from insurgent citizenship (Holston, 1999), insurgent public space (Hou, 2010), insurgent planning (Miraftab, 2009). In all of these cases insurgency refers to an attitude to subvert, transgress, resist and imagine a different way of doing and thinking in opposition to institutional legitimacy and status quo. In a way, insurgency as a practice shares a similar attitude with Jane Rendell’s concept of critical spatial practice (Rendell, 2003). Rendell explains critical spatial practices as everyday activities and creative

practices that “resist the dominant social order of capitalism” (Rendell, 2011, p. 24). Being the capitalistic order the ‘necessary’ experiential frame of legitimacy and social life (Karatamy, 2005).

Urban curating has been another field of interest for Meike Schalk. Raoul Bunschoten and artist Jeanne van Heeswijk (1993) initially used the term as part of their Chora research group methodology. Urban curating has come to mean an alternative disruption to the authoritative position of urban planning as de-facto legitimate timeless agency of the expert professional upon communities. Urban curating proposes an itinerant, impermanence process away from scripted “hit and run practices” of participatory planning design and strategies (Greed, 2000). Thereby dislodging urban planning from permanence and conventionality into flexible temporal frameworks of the exhibition as method and forum for an unconventional practice free of static design and planning rules (Schalk, 2007). The architect acting as ‘curator’ is liberated from the ‘myth’ of the artist-architect whose authority is based on professional judgment and authorship. In this new position as ‘curator’, the architect redefines their professional positioning in the middle, in between institutions, clients, and users. Rather than a master director, the architect becomes a mediator. (Schalk, 2007).

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Elke Krasny.

Curator Elke Krasny contributions to art and architectural practice has been centered in the theorizations and practice of urban curating. Her new incoming book titled Urban Curating: Care, Repair, Refuse, Resist (2022) further explores the concepts of Curatorial materialism, community building and restorative practices applied to the politics of urban transformation.

Krasny (2016) argued the feminist concept of independent curating was very much responsible for catalyzing the transformation from modern art towards contemporary art. Feminist critique informed the necessity for the practice of independent curating, which became the foundations of curatorial materialism (Krasny, 2016). Curatorial materialism is based on a feminist perspective on Marx's materialism and how it has politically influenced the framework of independent and co-dependent practices of curating. Curatorial materialism brings the complex relations between art, architecture and planning practices, theories and historiographies into a dialectical relation with the socio-political and economic struggles of society.

Curatorial materialism follows Marxist materialist approach to history and class struggle towards a narrative, where political economy and material interactions are the inevitable protagonist in all political and socio- economic struggles of modern extractivist capitalism (Gago, 2017; Gómez-Barris, 2017; Valencia, 2018).

Krasny suggests (2016) curatorial materialism as a methodology for critical investigation into the conditions and means of curatorial production. Krasny brings special attention to the asymmetrical power relations and hierarchies between the

complex networks of relations that feminist curatorial practices have transformed. Thereby, feminist curatorial practices have changed the way in which art relates to the world. (Krasny, 2016).

Krasny presents this transformation as a practice of relatedness. Such practice is integral to the practice of curating as 'relatedness' transforms the power asymmetries and hierarchies between actors and agents. Krasny further argues the practice of relatedness as central to curatorial materialism and "relatedness to the world as a way of producing, including the production of new epistemologies and emergent histories." (Krasny, 2016, p. 97).

Recently, Elke Krasny (2019) has worked together with architect Meike Schalk on feminist practices in art and architecture researching practices of resistance and resiliency. Their work was centered on "ability to connect" and "building up networks" (Krasny & Schalk, 2019, p. 179). Their research looked up three specific events: Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (Buenos Aires, Argentina.1977-ongoing), Colectivo Precarias a la Deriva (Madrid, Spain. 2002-ongoing) and the art project by artist Suzanne Lacy, The International Dinner Party (1979). The research investigated the emergence of new subjectivities, the appropriation of public hegemonic spaces and resiliency through transgressive practices.

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The unifying nexus between these five authors, actors, theorist and practitioners has been *transgression* as the key performative epistemic action to create new transformative epistemologies, relationships and practices that promote sustainability, solidarity, connectedness and justice. Feminist practices reveal the urgent need for a different understanding, a way of "knowing and doing otherwise"

(Grosz, 1999), “practicing otherwise” (Petrescu, 2007) to make visible (Schalk, 2017) and to create new futures. Nevertheless, the postcolonial feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohandy (1984) warns us, grouping together on the basis of a shared oppression, assuming a universal patriarchal framework and a feminism that binds together because of the “sameness of their oppression.” (Mohandy, 1984, p. 337). Whereby we must be careful not to fall into Marx’s hermeneutical injustice, (Fricker, 2007) if “they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.” (Mohandy, 1984, p. 354).

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4.1. On the commodification of art.

> *“I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife. I am a mother. (Random order) I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) I ‘do’ art. Now I will simply do these everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as art [...]* ***MY WORKING WILL BE THE WORK****”* (Laderman Ukeles, 1969).

In the commodification art one thing must be made clear: art and the art object are two different merchandises. The former is the immaterial social capital that is produced by the social interactions in participating of the art market and the conspicuous prestige of taste and class relational to being close to the art world. The latter, the art object, is the traditional materiality and value of the object produced, given that it also embodies the immaterial value of the mythology of the artist. Nonetheless, the art object becomes a *transitional object* (Winnicott, 1951) between transactional desire of the art object as means to a goal, and the goal itself a dependency of consumption for social positioning.

What makes a thing into a commodity? The simplest explanation is: commodification is the process of transforming a good or service into an exchangeable merchandise for the purpose of profit. This means that the exchange value of a thing (product) prevails over its use value.

On the other hand, the activity-labour that produces the "cultural content" of the commodity is regarded as immaterial labour. These involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work" – in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion (Lazzarato, 1996). Artists and art institutions; museums, art foundations and galleries have adopted the representation of *cultural workers* to define their field of action and to legitimize their social function. Artists have moved away from the concept of *the revolutionary artist* (Benjamin, 1968) and embraced the concept of *radical cultural workers*, whose task "*is to reveal the constructed character of meaning"* (Trend, 1995, p. 9). Artists and architects have exploited this image of themselves as *radical cultural workers* to accentuate the marketability of their immaterial labour.

When art is treated as a commodity, rather than thinking of the commodity as a certain kind of "thing", following Arjun Appadurai (1986), it would be more precise to think of it as a stage or period in the life of the artwork. When art is a cultural artefact, and an object of exchange, its value and identity as art are subject to the changing winds of taste and fashion. Art as commodity is subject to the whims and fluctuations of capital. As *"Capital operates across places, territory, and scales, deploying a logic that is ultimately planetary but must continuously come to terms with resistances, frictions, and interruptions that crisscross the expansion of its*

frontiers and geographies" (Medrazza and Neilson, 2019, p. 3). Thus, art also inherits the properties of its master: capital.

Robert Layton and Gillian Wallace (2006) posited that "*The market economy is itself a cultural phenomenon"*. Thus, art falls together with the idea that *"all commodities (even raw materials) are cultural artefacts in the sense that demand for them is culturally constructed"* (Layton and Wallace, 2006).

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4.1.1. Consumption.

Jean Baudrillard tried to demystify the ideology of consumption as a utilitarian behaviour, where the subject is driven by pleasure and personal desire (Lipovetsky, 1994). In Baudrillard's theorizations on the consumption of things driven by the social goal to achieve a per-se social and political positioning, the art object as well as the architecture built to contain it – museums, luxury homes, and corporate headquarters – are incorporated into the same system of desire and consumption. Baudrillard's position on consumption is close to Thorstein Veblen's theory of *conspicuous consumption* (Veblen, 1899). Here the prevalent behaviour of the consumer is to acquire the proper items of distinction to display wealth and income rather than to cover the real needs of the consumer, as a kind of functioning social camouflage. Hence, consumption is principally guided by a scripted performance of social positioning, rather than the individual's prescription of fulfilment of pleasures and desires. Antonio Negri and David Hardt (2000) argued that desire is an

ontological motor of the biopolitical practices of being (Negri and Hardt, 2000, p. 389). For Deleuze, Kim Dovey argues desire is the primary force of life. Kim Dovey describes desire as a flow of life, an event of becoming that precedes being and identity (Dovey, 2010).

Therefore it can be said that the need to consume is guided by a competition for social status, where merchandises are *"class exponents"* or the social signifiers of class status and social mobility. As Gilles Lipovetsky posited on the production of objects: "*Innovation exists only in order to reproduce social differentiation"* (Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 144).

Margaret Crawford opens the section titled "The Utopia of Consumption" in her essay "The World in a Shopping Mall" (1992) by stating that there is a *"new ethos that has penetrated every sphere of our lives"*; by *new ethos* she means a completely infectious new way of sensing the world around us that has become our principal characteristic as a society and as individuals, a kind of pre-packaged ideology. Crawford posited that this *ethos of consumption* has converted *"culture, leisure, sex, politics and even death"* to items of consumption, or *commodities*. Hence, *"consumption increasingly constructs the way we see the world,* (Crawford, 1992). That was stated almost 28 years ago. Nowadays it is not a supposition, but is the globalizing aesthetic of a life of consumption that unites most countries around the world. Capitalism's triumphant worldwide expansion has had the *"unifying"* sense of a pseudo-homogenization. Cees J. Hamelink called this a *synchronization* of taste and desire (Hamelink, 1983). Instead of using the concepts that come with homogenization as being composed of only one expansion, the

hyper-consumerist social form of capitalism nowadays better reflects the site of a menu than the sense of free choice. The menu consists of homogenizing globalizing options within an *ample range of consumer options* (Valencia, 2018). The pastoral image of the *ordinary man* (De Certeau, 1984), the common person, from the sedimented ideals of homogenous purity, harmony and congeniality of consumer capitalist societies of the Global North, is nowadays firstly defined by its consumption habits. Commodities define lifestyles but beyond the mere acquisition of commodities is the acquisition of the items of social and class recognition in globalized consumer capitalism. The social camouflage of class position, where the cloak of consumption fashionize the traditional recognizable markers of class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, represents a global drive towards an expanded sense of homogeneity by camouflage.

In such fashion the idea of the individual is determined by the consumption of the appropriate items of identity and taste. Marc Auge argues that the individual *"is not just anybody: he is identified with the society of which he is an expression"* (Auge, 1995, p. 21).

Agnes Heller (1977) relates to this ontology of the individual defined by its social environment instead of its natural qualities.

> *"The supposition that the human essence is the starting point or the nucleus to which all social influences are superimposed to, instead it constitutes a result of these social influences over which the supposition that the individual, since its birth is in an active relationship with the world within she was born into and that her personality is formed thru this relationship"* (Heller, 1977, p. 7).

According to Baudrillard, individuals are no longer citizens in the traditional sense of historical materialism, of citizens fighting for their civil rights; nor proletarians,

anticipating the onset of communism. They are rather *consumers*, and hence the prey of objects as defined by the social codes of consumption (Baudrillard, 1996).

Michel de Certeau refers to *"the euphemistic term consumer"* to describe the user, the dominated element of society (De Certeau, 1984, p. xii). Sayak Valencia adds that *"identity itself is reconfigured and re-subjectivized through the media, publicity, technologies of gender, and hyper consumerism"* (Valencia, 2018, p. 213).

In the present social frame of consumerism as an identity-shaping performance, even the least privileged want access to the emblematic symbols of the society of hyper-consumption, and they give every sign of individualistic aspirations and behaviours, even if they are simply following the fashion of influencers and the market set of the upper class (Lipovetsky, 2007, p. 183). Thus, the art object and proper architecture remain as favourite signs of elite taste and class advancement.

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4.1.2. Demand and desire.

In his book *The Social Lives of Things* (1986), Arjun Appadurai raises the notion of demand; regarding the economic transaction, he says that demand is still viewed as a mystery. Appadurai states that it is so because we understand demand as attached to *desire.* He continues with the assertion that demand emerges as a function that arises from the variety of classifications and social practices. Demand, he posits, must be thought about as a proper human phenomenon. Demand is constituted as a mechanical response to a social manipulation.

In the interstices between the cultural complexities of consumption and the dilemmas of desire is where the transitory art object is continuously rearranged and placed within the art-architecture complex (Foster, 2013). By the art object, I refer to a generalization for a materiality needed in order to reify art as product , although, the Western meaning of the art object has always been linked with the experience of art in tandem with the fetishization of the tangible material object. The art-architecture complex is produced from the relationships between demand, desire and consumption. Hal Foster links this relationship to the critique of art and architecture's legitimacy. Foster argued that this relationship is driven solely by economic convenience before any critical theoretical spatial or aesthetic discourse (Foster, 2011).

Within the logic of neoliberal capitalism, demand is an economic expression of the political logic. Therefore, to find the logic of demand it has to be searched within the political. What I am referring to is to the fundamental aesthetic change between the logic of post-Fordism capitalism, where the demand for a homogenized desire for mass consumption was the prescribed aesthetic, to the simulation of participation of the consumer as user – user of an apparent menu of possible scripted participations in the market-production relationship.

Appadurai suggests that consumption as an action is eminently social, relational and active, instead of private and passive. Certainly, this point, which Appadurai raised in 1986, is necessary to include today, when consumption is participation or participatory. The logic of participation is always about a structured selection within the limits of a prescribed menu of options. It is not the mistakenly colloquial sense by which it is assumed that to participate has to do with the existence of an

imperative of individual protagonist with the power to change, contribute or co-operate with the stipulated a priori logic. Participation is founded on the same designs of scripted actions and performances, which are usually related to ideas about democracy.

Art as object or art as experience is positioned as the social classificatory instrument in service of the market. The conterminous relation between art with the market lies in the manufacture of the elite taste, the good taste, the cultivated taste.

The elite taste has the social function of discerning from multiple exogenous possibilities, appropriating, assimilating and then providing the appropriate models for the market, together with the political control for the production of internal taste as a global product for mass consumption.

In this era of globalized electronic capitalism (Spivak, 2012) the homogenization of the market structures as well as desire as *machine-desire* (Guattari and Deleuze, 1983) has been used as a production mechanism of social capital through the manufacture and acquisitions of the *items of social recognition*. The items necessary for social camouflage as the ideal of consumer capitalism's desire to blur class differentiation by means of acquisition and consumption. Camouflage is to assimilate. Assimilation involves a process of relating to the environment, given that the environment includes the appearances and behaviours of other human beings, not only the built space of architecture and the constructed space of society. Assimilation is not limited to the purely physical, though; it happens on a mental level too (Leach, 2006). Neil Leach wrote, *"We human beings are governed by a chameleon like urge to blend in with our surroundings – to 'camouflage' ourselves*

within our environment. We need to feel at home, and to find our place in the world" (Leach, 2006, p. ix).

The paradoxical condition of the commodification of art is that, for centuries, art and all its distinct categories of its practice have been used as objects of economic value and social capital. The ritualized commodification of the art object in Western society is part of its Western ontology. Art as mythicized anti-merchandise commodity, from the theological perspective of the sacred art object to the modernist avant-garde conception of art as the revolutionary anti-capitalist ephemeral commodity. Art plays the anti-hero character in Western capitalism's story of market commodification.

The commodification of art is tied to the structuring of desire, capitalized as global and, in a manner, homogenized or *synchronized* to the particularities of the market's taste. Mark Poster states that *"In a commodity the relation of word, image or meaning and referent is broken and restructured so that its force is directed, not to the referent of use value or utility, but to desire"* (Poster, 1988).

The inherent tendency of capital is towards the creation of a global market, according to Marx in his *Grundrisse* manuscript (1974, p. 408). By this logic, Marx argues that each limit that shows up is a barrier to exceed. Capitalism, as a global socio-economic system, is simultaneously a politico-economic and aesthetic phenomenon. This logic appropriates and absorbs all manifestations within and outside the system and makes them its own. It transforms, modifies, purifies, and commodifies all objects and experiences into the production of *fashion* as identity politics.

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4.1.3. Art process and the capital gain of the art object.

The feminist activist Zillah Eisenstein argued that *"Capital is intersectional. It always intersects with the bodies that produce the labour. Therefore, the accumulation of wealth is embedded in the racialized and engendered structures that enhance it"* (Eisenstein, 2014).

For gallery owners, museum directors, art dealers, collectors, critics, curators, and audiences, the relative capital gain of art, its simulated uniqueness, and its shortage of product are all integral parts of the manipulation of an art market reigned by an *'international style'.*[28] A fashionable aesthetic directed by the international art fairs and biennial circuit. The manipulation of the art market and its subsequent manipulation towards a "*proper style"* – the *"gallery-ready"* image – hides the non-diverse nature of the politico-aesthetic discourses within the processes of art-making. This is supplanted by superfluous spectacles of exotic process presented as vanguardist artistic practices that appropriate from social and community activism tactics, aesthetics, and discourse into their own legitimizing discourse. From the once romanticized wilderness of Rousseau to the coasts of Gauguin's Tahitian utopianism, the underground allure of the socially marginalized of the Parisian brothels and the surrealist, and even including the mysticism and adventure of civil-war Spain, throughout modernism, undying romance with suffering has been

[28] I am borrowing from architecture of the 20s and 30s. This term was coined by Phillip Johnson and Henry Russell Hitchcock in 1932 to describe the architecture style that came to dominate stylistically and conceptually the world architecture until the 1970s. I am using this term critically to emphasise the instrumental problematic of adopting functionalist models as dogma to follow.

the fodder of *“inspiration”.* The new class of Hemingway-esque-style artists and architects who are *“inspired”* by the plight of the marginalized and exploited classes of the poorest countries of the earth, are here now trying to find their own *“raison d’être*" between activism and tourism. This new social agent, the socially engaged artist and architect, are going to have to decide to whom they serve: this could be the commodification of culture by *artivism* tourism of *art-washing* that enables gentrification and expulsions; or it could be a selfless exercise of solidarity. As Deleuze and Guattari had argued, *“There is no desiring-machine capable of being assembled without demolishing entire social sectors”* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972).

Baudrillard posited that *“the only thing that exists is what can assume value, and hence pass from one to another”* (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 77). Albeit that the romantic illusion of art as a selfless practice is only publicity. The crude reality is as Baudrillard states: if art cannot assume value as a commodity, in this socio-economic system, it will cease to exist as such. Art without commodification as social capital is culturized as folklore.

With this fateful statement I leave the clear postulate of the impossibility to change the art market and its functionalist influence over the practice of art-making without first removing the reigning economic and political system.

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Chapter 5. The site and its marginalization.

This chapter conveys the socio-political elements that compose the social tectonics of the space where artists and architects are implementing their practices. The “lack of space” for artists and architects, especially from developed nations, to create a meaningful professional practice in their own countries has had the effect of a professional rush to the cities of the underdeveloped nations of the Global South. The spaces that have been most attractive to these artists and architects have been the informal dwellings of the poor living in the periphery of the city. The following is an exploration into what constitutes these spaces, and how these spaces became the site of artists’ and architects’ social practices. This chapter concludes by arguing that artists and architects have constructed the idea of the site from a colonizer’s perspective, where the poor, disfranchised, and marginalized inhabitants of informal settlements are portrayed in need of the artist and architect’s intervention.

5.0. On the site.

The site is not a grid on a plan; it is a place inhabited by many peoples in various social structures, interactions, and struggles. The amalgam of group relations between people and their natural and constructed environment shapes the social tectonics of the site. The social and political human interventions and struggles over the site’s territory and human composition ineluctably shape the form and feel of the field. The social interactions within the site and between agents from outside makes the site a place of contested definitions and rights. The social tectonics (Jackson and Butler, 2014) of the site are thus complex and dynamic. The site as

abstract space is terra nullius, a site for colonization, open to intervention; on other occasions the site is a socially constructed space and a violently contested place. The site as a place of dwelling is an informal definition. But the site is never just *flat data*, or the erasure of socio-topographically singularities of place (Frampton, quoted in Rice, 2012).

The recordings and mapping of imaginary geographies indexed as *cognitive maps* (Lynch, 1960) of space as site associated with a particular value in the construction of legitimization of a particular history, place, events and feelings. Social hierarchies and cultural classifications are often described and spatially bounded, placed, located, included or excluded within a spatial metaphor that is the site. Sites become symbols that are woven into the narrative of the self, the local, the culture, and the nation. Sites become tools of differentiation. Sites become places when they start to exude feelings, senses of affective ties. When sites achieve the sense of topophilia (Bachelard, 1958; Tuan, 1976, 1977), sites become interwoven into the individual's everyday narratives. Site defines the space away from Cartesian abstraction. Site is place when the intensity of recollections of life, myth and stories bring together sentiment and place, effectively tying a person to their environment. (Shields, 1991).

> *"In forensic terms the division is straight forward: the field is the site of investigation and the forum is the place where the results of an investigation are presented and contested"* (Weizman, 2014, p. 9).

The *forum* in turn brings into the dynamics of the research practice *a place where the results of the research are presented and contested.* The forum is understood as a composite of three distinct and complementary elements. Weizman called the first element *"a contested object or site"* and the second element "*the interpreter"* or

translator. Third, "*the public"*, is what Weizman named *"the assembly of a public gathering"* (Weizman, 2014, p. 9). This *assembly* could be seen in terms of art and architecture practices as an *audience* or as a *public.* The determinants that make this division, as Martha Rosler (1987) states, are that the *audience* is the assemblage of consumers of spectacles, in contrast to *public*, which refers to those having *"the space of decision making"* (Rosler, 1987, p. 14). The *site*, the *interpreter*, and the *public* are much contested terms, semantically as well as politically. However, in art and architecture social practices these concepts are routinely used without a clear distinctive definition. Thus, these concepts are unknowingly treated as universal definitions that could be applied to all social tectonics regardless of geopolitical and cultural differences.

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5.0.1. The city as site.

> *"The city has operated as a grand aesthetic curatorial project, a monstrous public art gallery for massive exhibitions, permanent and temporary, of environmental architecture 'installations'; monumental 'sculpture gardens'; official and unofficial murals and graffiti; gigantic 'media shows'; street, underground and interior 'performances'; spectacular social and political 'happenings'; state and real-state 'land art projects'; economic events, actions and evictions (the newest form of exhibited art); etc., etc."* (Wodiczko, 1987, p. 41).

The crisis for liveable space is a major problem; it is at its core about the lack of public accessibility to space. That is, accessibility not only to space as an abstract concept, but also to the general concept of participation in the democratic constitution of a society. Where the individual's need of a space to live and thrive is not a concession but a right, this problem points towards the access to the basic human right to live and be in place(Heidegger, 1971). A person can be, in this way,

on a piece of land or on the 66th floor of a structured multi-floor piece of architecture. The right and human need to be and dwell as a constituted person, a citizen of a society and as part of a community is the locus of this crisis, and to all the concomitant problems that arise out of it. All of this belongs to the constitution of the *'modern city'*.

Such crisis is thought to be intrinsically inevitable to the evolution of the modern city, and to the limits of the practice of planning the modern city. This is not a problem that is caused only by lack of sufficient built space or insufficient public space. There are more complex socio-economic and political causalities behind this crisis. The shortcomings of the state's social plans and the behaviour of consumer capitalism's strategies to benefit capital over all other matters are at the centre of this crisis (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999; Sassen, 2014; Gago, 2017).

Traditional short-sighted urban planning remains focused on dwellings as its main topic subjected to transformation and experimentation, relating superfluous considerations to the access and availability of public space only as instrumentally aimed to pacify social life.

Adolf Loos (1931), the modernist architect, one of the architects who were at the forefront of the critique of mainstream architecture of his day, argued that architecture is not like art, *"responsible towards nobody"* – a private business regarding the client and the architect – but *"rather it is responsible towards everybody"* (Loos, 1931).

The history of intent in architecture, to solve the problems of the modern city, is filled with well-intentioned initiatives. The 19th century left a legacy of rules and

regulations that were aimed at creating, first, the idea of public infrastructure – water, power, sewage and sanitary services organized and managed by the state – and second the creation of universal regulations of public order. The list of international conferences intended to solve the ills of the modern city are vast. Starting in 1928 the CIAM I conference The Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, that took place in La Sarraz, Switzerland, these conferences were initially held in the period in between the two World Wars: CIAM II, in Frankfurt (1929); CIAM III, in Brussels (1930); CIAM IV, in Athens (1933). Each of these conferences produced a charter of successive improved regulations aimed at making live better in the fast-growing modern cities of Europe. They also served as a blueprint to follow in the planning and developing of all cities across the world. To this day we are still using some of the practices that were agreed in these conferences. Not all of the practices and regulations that came out of these conferences proved to be successful at solving the urban human habitation problem. Le Corbusier's contribution, the 1943 matrix housing and zoning ideas, eventually proved disastrous in some social-housing projects, as represented by the Pruitt-Igoe housing project that came to be protagonist of the failures of modernist social architecture.

Another of Le Corbusier's social-housing projects was Nantes Rezé, which also came to epitomize the end of the grand plans of *High Modernism* that the state had imbued architecture to resolve, and in the process protect the hegemony of the state over the city and the nation. At CIAM XI, in Otterlo, the Netherlands, the so-called "subversive" Team X intended to changed the focus of modernist architecture from the industrial mass development towards an interest in the

"ordinary-standard man"; sadly enough, as in the case of Michel De Certeau's theorizations in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), they forgot to look at who *"ordinary-standard man"* might be. The people who were migrating to European cities in the post-war years were not the *"ordinary-standard"* women and men that were thought of as the traditional patriarchal Eurocentric working-class "man". There were also in increasing numbers the people displaced by the independencies of the old colonies of the European empires, who came to live in the social-housing experiments at the periphery of European cities but were neither ordinary nor standard for the European idea of city dweller.

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5.1. On community.

> *"One man's imagined community is another man's political prison"* (Appadurai, 1989).

"Almost anything can appear under the heading of 'community' and almost anything can be justified if this prefix is used." Stanley Cohen argued this truism in his book *Visions of Social Control* (Cohen, 1985, p. 116). He rightly observed that the word "community" by itself did not have any actual clear meaning. Instead the word "community", Cohen posits, *"is rich in symbolic power"*. One of its greatest symbolisms, Cohen observed, is that the word *"community"* does not have any negative meanings attached to it (Cohen, 1985, p. 117). The colloquial use of "community" envisions a de facto sense of implicit goodness. Unlike all other terms of social organization – the state, nation, society, culture, class – community never seems to be used unfavourably, and it is a term that never suggests conflict or

opposition (Williams, 1983). Thus, community has the same discursive appeal to all political agendas.

One part of this ephemeral symbolism of goodness that the word community embodies is what Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) presented: *"Community is what takes place always through others and for others. It is not the space of the egos – subjects and substances that are at bottom immortal"* (Nancy, 1991, p. 15). There is an implicit theological morality attached to the word community; it is presented as selfless action for the good of the many. On the other hand, community is a disciplinary structure that structures the individual to adhere to the community's *"moral code"* (Heller, 1970).

The Hungarian philosopher Agnes Heller (1970) wrote: *"A community is a structuralized and organized group or unit stratum in which a relatively homogeneous system of values obtains, and to which the person necessarily belongs"* (Heller, 1970, p. 34).

Heller posited that community is a social category, in so far as it is a category of integration. Thus, Heller pairs community to integration. Heller goes on to categorize some forms of social integrations as means for human beings organizing themselves into groups, social classes, villages, and families. All can be communities but are not necessarily so, unless they meet what Heller called *"the concrete content of integration"*.

The definition of community that Heller presented takes a functionalist reasoning to community as "necessary" from the point of view of the social aggregate[29] and society in which the unit of production or of management – usually both – is the community, and in which the community forms an organic and indispensable component of the social structure.

Heller presents a close view of community where the individual is necessarily *"born into"* the community; the limits of his community are prescribed at the moment of birth (Heller, 1970, p. 34).

Communities that arise not as embodiments of essential social needs, but as derivate of political actions and/or individual development – for example, diaspora communities and transnational communities – play a completely different part.

In these contexts, it becomes the *world-idea community* in its visualizations: quotidian, political and social-scientific, with much of the symbolic power derived from a profound sense of nostalgia.

There are other definitions of what community is away from what David Harvey called the collectivist rhetoric of the 1960s social movements (Harvey, 1990). There are the definitions that tied community to the specificity of a particular land, as a territory, and also as a common patrimony or bequest, in the sense of communal property. This becomes a vital problem when communities are expelled from their ancestral lands and become migrant and diaspora communities.

[29] A social aggregate is a collection of people who are in the same place at the same time, but who otherwise do not necessarily have anything in common, and who may not interact with each other.

> *"If there is no land on which the farmers may assemble, it is no longer possible to develop a community"* (Kluge, 1979).

Away from this more traditional perspective of community tied to land, the French philosopher Jacques Rancière argued of *"community as a way of occupying a place and a time, as the body in action as opposed to a mere apparatus of laws; a set of perceptions, gestures and attitudes that precede and pre-form laws and political institutions"* (Rancière, 2009, p. 6). Rancière's definition of community by the performative act of occupation is linked to the consolidation of public space as a performative act of communal occupation to act "in public" (Arendt, 1998). He goes further to differentiate what he calls a "*true community"*: *"A true community is therefore one that does not tolerate theatrical mediation; one in which the measure that governs the community is directly incorporated into the living attitudes of its members"* (Rancière, 2009, p. 3).

Nevertheless, the sense that we, in most modern Western societies, receive from the word community is from the culturalized sedimented definition of community, in common usage; from colloquialisms of political discourse and the social sciences, literature, art and architecture.

John Dewey wrote in *The Public and its Problems* (Dewey, 1980, p. 148) that democracy is *"the idea of community life itself"*, which brings into the question of community what Noelle McAfee brought to the forefront about the plurality of definitions about community: *"how a heterogeneous and diverse society can come to any kind of agreement about matters of common concern"* (McAfee, 2000, p. 184).

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5.1.1. The romanticism of the pure community.

This sense of community suffers from a romantic nostalgia – the symbolic evocation of a lost world, and melancholia about a symbolic utopian past. This is a past that might not really have existed, but whose mythical qualities are profoundly intertwined on our social consciousness of a cultural identity. A paradoxical past, where things were better, nobler, simpler and more authentic. It is quite close to Heidegger's existentialism and his romanticism of the past and the local as authentic (Heidegger, 1971). This nostalgic sense of community is a more complex multilayer phenomenon than it first appears, a "*layer cake"* (White, 1959) of sentimentality, melancholia, romanticism and nationalism, mixed up with layers of fear, racism, homophobia, sexism and the lost of hegemony.

Stanley Cohen argues that the form of the sense of community that we have inherited comes more from the side of crime-control ideology (Cohen, 1985). This is the fundamentalist publicity of fear and security that has become implanted into all political discourse. This fear is manifested when individuals start claiming their own territory under a mythical feeling of collectivity. This tendency to privatize the communal space of dwelling for the sake of security is part of the ideas of defensive space supported by community architecture (Till, 1998). The architect Oscar Newman (1972) proposed in his theory of defensive space that architecture could design a way to protect the individual from crime by territorializing public space into the individual's territory, a private community space as a defence from crime and violence. Therefore, community comes to be contextualized within the social frame of fear-security-control of one group to be protected from "others" who do not belong to the "community".

This in a nostalgic look to an imagined past community as the provider of the ideal and desirable form of social control. Cohen said about it that the *"impulse is reactionary and conservative, not in the literal political sense, but in always locating the desired state of affairs in a past which has now (usually just now) been eclipsed by something undesirable"* (Cohen, 1985). The "*something undesirable"* in political discourse today is the addition to this *imagined community* (Anderson, 1983) of the *"other"*; from migrants, sexual non-conformists, non-heteronormative people, people of "colour", and women, who are still left out of most political and social communities without equal access to power and rights.

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5.1.2. The myth of community.

As markets forces and urban developments move into appropriating "vacant" lands on the rural-urban fringe, there is a need for instant place-making. To create a market appeal, the publicity element becomes necessary. The desire for *"character"*" by the new urbanism and development necessitates a strong sense of place, *"community"*, and *"character"* (Dovey, 2010). Community became a branding global formula for selling instant authenticity, place and security. In order to absorb the "vacant" lands into the territorializing order of capitalism's commodities, such lands must first be tamed and colonized by mapping and narration (Said, 1993; Bhabha, 1994; Sassen, 2014). The sense of community thus became the formula for instant place-making. The sense of community accommodates and legitimates forms of cognitive mapping appropriations by naming of sites into a prescribed

order of things. Hence starts the weaving of a new narration, into the appropriate history to legitimate the imagined community as ever-present.

The conflicts imagining a sense of community came from the old reliance on defining community as related to a form of homogenous human settlement. A form of constructed dwelling environment attached to a vernacular series of social relations, hierarchies, politics, architecture and art. A culturized set of behaviours and language codes that distinguish this population apart from any other. All of these developments are located and dependent on place. Being in place of a territorialized geography or an imaginary diaspora construction (Anderson, 1983; Sandoval, 2000; Escobar, 2001; Sassen, 2006).

The persistent sense of community that is continually politically publicized has permeated as *a truth* in all social practices. Community embodies a sort of messianic attraction, where people will find the remedies to alienation, estrangement, rootlessness, loss of attachment, and disintegration of the social bond.

This definition of community has become the de facto propaganda for all sorts of urban-renewal proposals and social art and architecture projects that claim to create, reinforce, or rescue a *"sense of community"* and promote *"community-building".*

The publicity of community activism that calls for a return to community at first appears to be a sensible solution. This community activism has the tendency to fall into a Heideggerian nostalgia for the time when community was the romanticized fictional discourse of homogeneous community. The so-called "good old times"

were filled with dissension from the authoritative patriarchal heteronormative structure of the community. But dissension to the norm was and still is met with disdain, apathy, and abjection, often with extreme violence. Community, in the "good old times", was not something that a person joined. It was instead, as Agnes Heller (1970) noted, that the person is born into a community. The inescapable community structured by values, morals and traditions dictated and culturalized from the patriarchal hegemony.

Modernity was thought to bring individualism, secularization, and rationalism, thus opening the established structures of community and culture to release ordinary people from restraint and obedience, and from the traditional bonds of community. The counter-discourse of conservatism has been that modernity brought freedom to the individual that was instead unrest, loneliness, and anomie.

Populist political discourse simplifies the sense of community into binaries between good and bad community. The *"good community"* is then the place of the most vulnerable social groups, what Cohen called the *most labile social groups*; instead of rebelling against the order of community, *"they would all be able to learn the meaning of order, discipline and authority – the good community"* (Cohen, 1985, p. 119).

The political conservatism has appropriated the iconography of the small rural village as *"the good community"* of graspable social, religious and moral conservative values of *"anti-institutional sentimentality"* (Beck, 1979). This is contrasted with *the bad community* greatly publicized *via the negative*: the sense of

urban confusion and degradation, the squalors of the big city, and the impositions and interference of the state in the private and public life of the individual.

The conservative political agenda presents the salvation of the public from the interference of the state and the anomie of the "others" by their reintegration into the *good community*. From conservative politics, there is a resurgence of a tendency to look for a *"Golden Age"* of pre-capitalist *"community control"* (Cohen, 1985).

Both sides of the political spectrum, the left and right, and all the in-between from radicals to ultra-conservatives, have publicized their *"mourning the end of community"*. All have created their own disingenuous ideas, images and sense of what communities were in the "good old times".

All have posited their own vision of what a community should be for their own political purposes and economic gains.

In this contentious, politically charged quest for community, artist and architects are seeking validation of their practices by intervening with communities, especially with those who are at the marginalized fringes of society; it is most necessary to recognize the superfluous role that a single artist or a small group of artists and architects can do to change a community. Even more important is to question whether or not the community needs the intervention of an artist or architect to solve what we imagine from the outside are their problems.

Cohen wrote that *"most attempts to recreate community in fact constitute evidence of the end of community"*. Thus, we should start by questioning what is what we

think community is, and what purpose it serves, before starting a socially engaged practice.

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5.2. The marginalized.

"For the embattled

there is no place

that cannot be

home

nor is"
Audre Lorde. "School Note". 1978.

Edward Said wrote that *"the history of the marginalized, the subaltern, in 'literal fact' is a narrative missing from the official story"* (Said, 1988). The official story is the one that we know to be the story from the side of the victorious. The marginal from their subjectivity as the subaltern are the ones left aside history's narrative. *"History is our collective memory only if it is narrated through a multiplicity of voices"* (Caffentzis and Federici, 2019). Otherwise, we remain blind to a world of connections and meaning.

For the context of this research, marginalization is an imposed socio-political condition as well as a spatial reference of subordination, and a temporal dislocation away from the official narrative of history. Thus, the site of the marginalized is centred exclusively on the study of the site, where the practices of social art and architecture engage with the social – the people who live and dwell in this place.

The place is the contested territories where poor migrants from rural communities landed at the borderlands of the city. Borderlands are the land invasions between the rural-urban divide. These are call borderlands because they act as a frontier and buffer zone between the reality of the metropolis, the urban centre and its progressive circles of expanding exurbia until reaching the borderlands that demarcate a porous frontier between realities. Beyond the last circle of urban development is where the borderlands start. The borderlands are dynamic social and physical structures that mutate with the social and economic movement of their inhabitants. These are the spaces where the migrant poor invade, appropriate, and settle. This represents the margin of the city and the limits of formal society and government. Of the margins, bell hooks said that *"to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body"* (hooks, 1990). The main body of upper-class society lies at what is today a metaphorical centre. Modern capitalist society is not arranged in traditional concentric circles of power and influence, emanating power from the centre onwards to a subjugated periphery; instead, there are multiple, disparate and at times intersecting circles of power, subjugation, and habitation. The marginalized are not equated with a concrete condition of economic immobility. The marginalized traverse the metropolis as workforce and as consumer. The frontiers of the borderless are porous to the interest of capital. A condition of social camouflage is an imperative for the marginalized to transgress the imposition of borders imposed upon them by race, class and gender. Still, in this rapidly evolving social landscape of globalized consumer capitalism, an overview of what marginality has meant in academic writing is needed to properly contextualize the site and field of social art and architecture practice.

Marginality is becoming universal, wrote Michel De Certeau (1984) in the general introduction of his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*. He presented marginality as "*a massive and pervasive cultural activity of the non-producers of culture"*. De Certeau posited with these assumptions that marginality as "*an activity that is unsigned, unreadable, and unsymbolized"* had once only been *"limited to minority groups"* but is now a "*universal"* operation that characterizes consumption, together with the practices of appropriation that produced the "*showy products"* that a *"productivist"* economy needs for its articulation (De Certeau, 1984). These "*showy products"* that De Certeau spoke of are the items of recognition necessary for social camouflage. The "*minority groups"* to which he alluded are the groups without a fixed or properly defined place in the social edifice (Zizek, 2000). Thus the marginalized do not have a concrete defined place within the social construct of metropolitan urbanism. Their settlements and social conditions are taken as temporary. Although their dwellings might not move spatially, they progress in the structure of their temporal architecture au pair with their economic standing. These dwellings start with what appear as temporary constructions because of the nature of the materials available to them: recycled cardboard, and plastic. Subsequently the material of their structures change, to recycled and second-hand appropriated wood and corrugated metal, to eventually raw brick and mortar. Eventually, this dwelling will resemble the traditional house, with finished surfaces, glass windows, and second or third floors to accommodate the by then extended family. This site of marginality has metaphorically moved upscale and thus does not represent the limits of the borderlands anymore. The border has moved further away, repeating

the same cycle of land invasion, informal occupation, appropriation of lifestyle, and settlement dwelling in place-community.

An early essay from 1928, "Migration and the Marginal Man," by Robert Park, who was one of the original members of the Chicago school of sociology, defined marginality as a state of limbo between at least two cultural life-worlds (Weisberger, 1992). From a more contemporary position, Miranda Fricker (2006) argued that marginality is a moral-political position indicating subordination and exclusion from some practice that would have value for the participant (Fricker, 2006).

Marginalization is an interrelated social process of relegating specific groups of people to the lower or the outer edges of the society, not only spatially but also morally and spiritually. *"Marginalization operates as function, as cause and also as a social product"* (Perlman, 1976, p. 40). This social product of marginalization works as an instrument of segregation by creating the logistical conditions to perpetuate the abject conditions of life by denying access and participation to the state's infrastructure of education, power, water, sanitation and political participation.

Marcia Tucker (1990) argued that marginalization is a complex and disputed process. Marginalization is a relational term; it is dependent on the spatial provision of what it is that is being marginalized from. Thus, a conflictual binary relation between a defined centre and a marginal periphery appears to be necessary. In the simplest terms: "*Marginalization, that complex and disputatious process by means of which certain people and ideas are privileged over others at any given time"* (Tucker, 1990).

Mari Jo Deegan in 2002 posited her concept of the marginal persona as anyone whose *"perception of the self, experience of the world, and access to material resources do not fit" the "hegemonic" standard of "white, able-bodied, capitalist, and heterosexual men"* (Deegan 2002, p. 108). Deegan's treatment of marginality is as a social construction not a social phenomenon. Marginality is thus defined by Deegan as "*any kind of isolation from or non-conformity to the dominant society or culture"* (Goldberg, 2012).

What it is continuously perpetuated in all these definitions is the dynamic between opposing forces – centre vs. periphery, inclusion vs. exclusion, majority vs. Minority – and all of these dynamics are present in the ways artistic and social practice operate (Tucker, 1990).

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5.2.1. Fashioning marginality.

Marginality since early on in the 20th century has been romanticized as a source of creativity, from Thorstein Veblen (1919), Paulina Bart (1971), Patricia Hill Collins (1986), Chela Sandoval's Chicano *artivism* (2008), Macarena Gómez-Barris's artist's decolonizing practices (2018), and many more. In contrast, Deegan's perspective shows that the *"dichotomized lives"* of the marginalized are *"intrinsically destructive to the marginal person"* (Deegan 2002, p. 110) rather than being an inspiration to creative action and a profound *"original"* insight at humanity's plight.

The *romanticism of suffering* that the arts inherited from early modernism's mythology of the artist has had the curious homogenizing effect of everyone from

white male artists, to feminist artists, to subaltern “minorities” artists supporting the romantic idealism of the marginal as a locus of inspiration. Artists practice the concept of *“optimal marginality”* (McLaughlin, 2001); instead of asking whether marginality leads to innovation and creativity, the practice remains interested only in qualifying the specific socio-political conditions under which it is likely to do so. Once located, *inspiration* can be mined and extracted from the site of the marginalized.

Today the constructed image of “the marginal” is not at the margins, the edges, the borders, or outside of the centre. Instead, it has become a fashionable concept; the definition of a disenfranchised spatiality and an emotion oblivion has been translated into the locus of the past two decades of sociological, anthropological, architecture and artistic vanguardist discourse. Guy Debord stated that*“ the image is the last stage of commodity deification”* (Debord,1994); the fashionalization of the image of the marginalized is, thus, assimilated into a commodity asset for political populist discourse, marketable items of faux-gansta and inner-city style, and as the legitimizing context for social art and architecture practices. Even the state’s instrumental bureaucracy appropriates the image of the *“marginalized”.* This image is the publicity instrument positioned at the centre of populism discourses and of the neoliberal public-private partnerships with the state. The image of the marginalized is now a common and necessary feature on discussions from government budget allocation to third-sector institutions and the re-definitions of the functions of the new neoliberal state. Art and architecture have not been immune to this discursive trend. From academia’s theoretical literature production

to artists' statements of purpose and architects' program proposals, the marginalized have become a must-feature to be represented in all proposals.

Since the times when the marginal meant to be excluded, forgotten and otherwise overlooked, from Marx to Friedman, a metamorphosis of meaning and image has happened. The functionalist image of the marginalized has become a deictic definition. Fashion, political, social, communal, activist, and revolutionary, it has always been a relational definition, as most definitions are. But in this case, it is not from the relational sense that the meaning coalesces. It comes from the perspective of the narrator, the interpreter that has the power of epistemic truth.

In this case to mean a deictic transformation in the usage of the term *the marginal* is a profound change to the legitimization of the image and sense of the marginality. The somatic sense of the world that is in use in academic theory and discourse is permeating towards a political populist discourse in which the marginal are laid as the beneficiaries of the welfare state. They are positioned as audience and munitions of neoliberal discourse against the modernist grand *récits* of the paternal welfare state.

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The white male Americo-European artist needed the fabrication of his own otherness to be able to partake of this creative force. By self-marginalization of self-imposed exile in the exotic lands far away from the metropolis of his own; or by another type of self-imposed exile, partaking in social and political practices and behaviours deemed inappropriate or immoral in their own social class. From Gauguin in Tahiti to Picasso in the brothels of Paris, Hemingway in the hyper-

masculinity of war, and Pollock in alcoholism, the attraction of the suffering of the marginal has been the creative locus of Western modern art. Culture conflict has been formulaically used as an impetus to creativity. Albeit that this creative impetus remains embodied in the metropolitan artist. The truly marginal artist is invited only as decorative legitimizing background. When he is, he is regularly paraded à la Basquiat, as object-exotic by dint of his negritude and addiction – the triple marginalization of race, class, and behaviour. The art market gobbles these subjects as novelties of urban lore. Once fashioned and commodified into the art-tourism of today's marginalized artists of colour in metropolitan biennales, full of artists rendered marginalized by natural disasters, social disasters, class, race, gender non-conformity, poverty, addiction, mental health, etc.

The feminist critic Barbara Christian (1988) first presented the situation of marginality in terms of value: *"a group can be ignored, trivialized, revered invisible and unheard, perceived as inconsequential, de-authorized, 'other', or threatening, while others are valorized"*. She continued to frame marginalization as an instrument of epistemic injustice and robbery.

> *"Western dualistic frame which sees the rest of the 'binary' world as minor and tries to convince the rest of the world that it is major, usually through force and then through language, even as it claims many of the ideas that we, its 'historical' other, have known and spoken about for so long. For many of us have never conceived of ourselves only as somebody's other"* (Christian, 1988, p. 70).

The art Museums of the world metropolis are full of these examples of artists, under the pseudonym of inspiration, reproducing extractive capitalism's functions of cultural appropriation, simulation, expropriation, and theft.

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5.2.2. The body of the marginalized.

"The good citizen when he opens his door in the evening must be banker, golfer, husband, father; not a nomad wandering the desert, a mystic staring at the sky, a debauchee in the slums of San Francisco, a soldier heading a revolution, a pariah howling with skepticism and solitude".

Virginia Woolf. Street Haunting, 1930.

Agnes Heller posits that *"in the 'history hitherto' of the human race, every person is a class-unit, that is to say, is the representative of humanity only in so far as he partakes in class possibilities, class value, class tendencies, and relays these in correlated form"* (Heller, 1984, p. 28). Heller continues to state that not every person can be a *"representative of humanity"* as embodiment of universal persona. The individual is inescapably bound to the socio-political classification of class; first, by the culturization of the social class where she belongs in the general idea of the nation and culture; and second, the individual is bound by the hierarchical positioning of herself in such class. Her class assignment is the position that the individual has attained by conflict or association; it is the social determinant. Hence, the *"historical class"* from where she comes from is a fateful endogenic continuity of a given socio-economic structure of self-reproduction.

The same individual is also bounded by determinism as *"class subject"*; thus, her class also regulates and disciplines the limits of her individuality (Heller, 1984).

When Michel De Certeau spoke of the everyday life, of walking the streets of the city, of art and theory, of popular culture and place, he spoke from the position of the experience as *"the ordinary man"* (De Certeau, 1984), the only man he could attest as knowing, and the only man he knew – himself. De Certeau spoke in universalisms, the only language he knew; that is to say, of what he understood and felt as being the *"simple fact of living"* (Agamben, 2008). This is what De Certeau understood to be *"common to all living beings"* (Valencia, 2018); what De Certeau saw, felt and symbolically could represent as being. From his cognitive imprisonment as a white European male, he could only glance to the other. The other bodies were not represented in his myopic perspective of "everyday life".

De Certeau dedicated his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) to the common man. One may ask what this gesture meant. It is unlikely that anyone outside the educated elite will be able or want to follow the argument it presented (Helga Wild, 2012). Women and the variations of the non-white European bodies remain silently at the margins of these theorizing. Edward Said (1986) said that *"Foucault himself teaches, that in this case, as in many others, it is sometimes of paramount importance not so much what is said, but who speaks"* (Said, 1986, p. 153).

Agnes Heller (1994) wrote: *"it was modernity itself that legally emancipated the body for the first time in history"* (Heller and Feher, 1994, p. 16), This emancipated body came supported on the backs of the others' bodies, the un-inscribed, the *"othered"*, the darker and the gendered bodies, whose unrecognized slave labour ploughed the grounds of modernity and capitalism itself.

The body of the marginalized is the disenfranchised body *"enunciated as a metaphor sublimated by politics"* (Valencia, 2018). It is the body categorized as political subject, but not an actor, and never agent. Kept in an *"absolute existential precarity, reducing human beings to extreme vulnerability"* (Valencia, 2018).

Modernity and capitalism assigned the ownership of things – property – to the entitlement to be counted, to become a citizen. Without ownership – private property – the individual is socially and politically invisible. The individual is barred of legal personhood and citizenship. Without personhood, without citizenship, we lose the *property rights to our own bodies* (Said, 1986; Valencia, 2018).

Marginalization and disenfranchisement are congruous partners. The conflated reality of the subdued bodies, the subjects of capitalism, globalization, debt, poverty and mass migrations from country to slum is not of *"the controller"* of their own bodies and less of their own life-world (Lugones, 2010; Segato, 2018a).

The city-metropolis is a parasite that needs to be incessantly fed from its margins (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999). It is in the *borderlands* where all the bodies, labour, and material are reproduced. Without these *borderlands* the metropolis and life-world will cease. The *borderlands* are the fertile grounds of life to the city. These are also the places of uprising and revolution. These are the dangerous sites of insurrection. From the disruption of darker genes, the romance of suffering strolls the city boulevards in the bodies of the marginalized perverting the official history, universalist theory, love, and art.

The Mexican feminist political philosopher Sayak Valencia asked that we stop using the concept of the *marginalized subject* in order to finally move beyond the political

simplifications of *exorcizing idyll* and to leave behind *"conceptualizations and compositions that oscillate between the extremes of victimhood and heroism, sympathy and glorification"* (Mezzadra., Chakravorty., Talpade., Shohat., et al, 2008, p. 239).

Valencia has very wisely and very succinctly positioned her political critique against the intellectual romancing of suffering. What she called the *critical glorification of difference* – the academic institutional discourse from the First World and the "third world" has perpetuated this patriarchal romanticism. This patriarchal practice of romanticizing suffering has been perpetuated from the European theological canon and mysticism, and before that from the imaginary classical civilization of Greek and Roman myths. This represents a romanticism of the practices of survival in the "third world" that goes well together with the masculinist sense of adventure that colonization provided to the white male ego[30]; the conquest of bodies and lands. Valencia's thoughts encompass a keen critique of the patriarchal systems of violence and gore in late capitalism, where new subjects are engendered in a violent system of consumption and subjugation, and where bodies are merchandise (Valencia, 2018).

Silvia Federici (2019) stated that the *"essential aspect of the capitalist project has been the disarticulation of the social body, through the imposition of different disciplinary regimes producing an accumulation of 'differences' and hierarchies that profoundly affect how capitalist relations are experienced"* (Federici, 2019, p. 16).

[30] Being white did not have so much to do with skin colour as with the staging of a cultural imaginary, posits Castro-Gómez, Santiago. 2005. La Hybris del Punto Cero.
Whiteness and masculinity are both performative identities that serve the male corporative structure of identity (Butler, 1998; Segato, 2018b).

The bodies of the marginalized are the disarticulated subjects of capitalism; this belongs to the market logic of hyper-consumerist capitalism and its ample menu of consumer options of identity and place.

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5.3. The monstrous.

> *"What we assume of each other is what we get out of each other"* (Bregman, 2020).

The construction of the monstrous has been a necessary representation to accentuate and validate the differences between them and us. The construction of national, tribal and individual identities, which are represented by ethics and morals that legislate over jurisprudence guarantees our social life. To guarantee the status quo of proper social life, a representation of abjection of what lies outside proper society is needed. Thus the monstrous is the fabrication necessary to reify our own existence as just, proper and good.

Monstrosity has been presented in art and architecture as a closed argument in aesthetic value and on the spatial representation of the built environment. To deem something to be monstrous classifies its condition as abject and as threat to the society. This classification makes easy the intervention and removal of groups of people, ideas, dwellings, and any other social and aesthetic manifestation that diverges from the set norm.

Rutdger Bregman argued that a priory condition of Western capitalism towards the "other", be it a distinct group of peoples, cultures, manners or ideas, has been *"of negative expectations"*; he called this a *"nocivo"* relationship of expecting the worst out of encounters with the unknown. *"Humankind has built their institutions around these assumed truths"*; hence, *"people are a product of the institutions in which they grew up"* (Bregman, 2020). Therefore, to start with an a priori "nocivo" notion of negative expectations yields negative outcomes. This intrinsic negativity is founded on the fear of the other, the stranger, the foreigner as figure of disruption.

The prevalent idea that *"civilization is a thin veneer"* (Bregman, 2020) has been at the cognitive centre of institution-building in modern society. The construction of the modern state rests on the principle that humans need to be disciplined. The institutionalization of discipline and control is an old practice, from Catholicism's treat of eternal damnation, to the construction of the architecture of institutions of confinement and punishment, of the prison, schools, and the modern police state (Foucault, 1972). John Adams argued in 1776, what became embedded at the heart of capitalism is the notion that all people are selfish, and that all men will be tyrants if they can (Adams, 1776).

Another disciplinary instrument was needed to keep society within the regulated bounds of the social. The disruptive influence of the other – the stranger – had to be demonized into abjection and myth. Thus, enters the construction of the monstrous to identify those outside the norms of proper society.

The construction of the monstrous present in art, literature and language is an intrinsic timeless theme and an apparent need of the human endeavour. It predates

organized civilization, and is spread worldwide throughout multiples cultures in myth, tale and practice. Hence, the assumption is that the theme of the monstrous is inscribed within the duality of parameters in the construction of identity and otherness; belonging and estrangement; good and evil; hegemony and marginality (Moraña, 2017). The monstrous as Mabel Moraña (2017) argued has a meaning that can only be understood in relation to its transcendence to the ambiguous, uncertainty, polysemy, doubt, mutation and re-signification. The monstrous is equally a designation of power and a metaphorical resistance to it; a subversion of power and an omen of catastrophe or enunciation of revolutionary social transformations. The monstrous is external, the foreigner, and the alien to the self. Nevertheless, the monstrous also dwells within the self, a threat from within to the social consciousness and certitudes of society. Such is the complexity of the monstrous, from transgressive to un-submissive; a metaphor to situate our singular character of existence, as good; in distinction to the unknown foreign outside our small perceived world.

The monstrous is also degeneration from within, an impetus of moving beyond our constitution as “being”. The construction of our being depends of a tightly contextual frame that signifies the constituent of a culture and traditions. To move beyond the prescribed cultural forms represents the imminent threat to the whole of culture and tradition. The need for a disciplinary depiction of a social category of abjection arises from the cognitive need to categorize a gap of distinction between them and us. Monstrosity works beyond the abject; it encompasses the fear of the unknown with the abject of deformity and infection. The monstrous is an ideological figure, a Frankenstein of social dogma and conformity. The infectious nature of this

monstrosity is that it extends its abject character to the sense of foreboding doom. Thus, monstrosity is contra positioned with purification. The theological conflict between good and evil: vampire against the virgin, Frankenstein vs. science-reason, and King Kong vs. love (as inscribed by the white body).

The social construction of the monstrous is reified in an antagonism that validates the purification of social space. David Sibley (1988) argued that *"the purification of social space involves the rejection of difference and the securing of boundaries to maintain homogeneity"* (Sibley, 1988).

Fredric Jameson (1981) spoke of the *"ultimate origin"* of the ideologies of the society of consumer capitalism as still being centred by binary oppositions of what he calls the *"master code of theocentric power societies".* Thus, it is presented that all positive and negative terms are *"ultimately assimilated by the mind as a distinction between good and evil"* (Jameson, 1981). This leaves society in a very simplistic binary to assimilate or understand all life experiences of the self and with other bodies; as threats to the *value systems* of their public persona. This limited presumption lends itself to a contraction of the self inwards towards the protective space of the private (Rudofsky, 1938; Chermayeff and Alexander, 1964), a defensive strategy of building literal physical walls, juridical walls, moral walls. Walls in urban-planning segregation (redlining) and apartheid strategies that go from the tactile, the somatic and the semantic to name territories of exclusion. *"Territory names a way to organize relations between space and power"* (Medrazza and Neilson, 2019, p. 24). Exclusion from philosophical episteme, and hermeneutical walls for ethics that conforms behaviour within the juridical closed binary discourses of absolute right

vs. absolute evil; transmuted to the divinity of the eternal plight between "good" vs. "evil". Therefore, this represents the construction of a narrative of ethics that sustains and defends the status quo of the dominant class; *"Ethics itself which is the ideological vehicle and the legitimation of concrete structures of power and domination"* (Jameson, 1981, p. 114).

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5.3.1. Naming the monstrous.

> *"Every human act takes place in language. Every act in language brings forth a world created with others in the act of coexistence which gives rise to what is human. Thus every human act has an ethical meaning because it is an act of constitution of the human world. This linkage of human to human is, in the final analysis, the ground-work of all ethics as a reflection on the legitimacy of the presence of others"* (Maturana and Varela, 1998, p. 247).

There is a curious anecdote about Hernán Cortés's arrival at the gates of the Aztec Empire's capital of Tenochtitlan in 1519. It is told that when Cortés and his men entered the city, the Aztec emperor Moctezuma received them in the splendour of his court with music, dancers and a banquet. It is said that Cortés turned to his men and uttered, *"What is this infernal noise?"* Cortés was referring to the music being played in the palace. The story continues that, on Cortés' return to Spain after the conquest of the Aztecs, he brought with him seven native Aztecs. When they were received in the Spanish crown's court, music was playing by the sovereign's favourite musicians. One of the Aztecs present turned to another and said, *"What is this infernal noise?"*

Mikhail Bakhtin (1985) argued that *"meaning in itself does not exist, it cannot be realized by itself; it only begins to exist in contact with another meaning, the*

meaning that comprehends it. The nature of understanding is dialogical" (Bakhtin, 1985, p. 366).

In that sense all knowledge-making practices are suspect because in making something visible they draw on pre-existing categories, and in the process, reinforce them. They serve the institutions of society rather than any specific group, but in general they are more influenced by the elite, which tries to reproduce society in its own image (Wild, 2012).

The Argentinian cultural critic Beatriz Sarlo in her book *La Ciudad Vista* (2009) indicates in her research working in the marginalized shanty towns (*barriadas*) surrounding the periphery of Buenos Aires, that the word *"monstrous*" has been for many years used to describe these informal settlements. Curiously, the conquerors of new lands have always characterized their subjects and their practices, cultural or tribal, as monstrous. The characterization of an aesthetic of monstrosity using race, gender and class has been key in the colonization of social and political hierarchical determinations and differentiation.

A determinate monstrosity expands from the colonized subject somatic norm and behaviour to the architectural of its dwelling environment. It is seen as residing in filth.

Sarlo posited that the term *"precarious monstrosity"* is used to describe the informal urban development of the marginal city. The site of *barriadas*, urban slums, shanty towns or the latest political term to describe the abject poverty in which millions live: *human settlements*, a politically neutralizing renaming of the slums, given by the state and thus pseudo-integrating them into the language of urban development

and renewal. The name is reminiscent of creating a sense of *settler-colonization* as permanent and with a future.

The construction of the *"place-images"* (Shields, 1992, p. 47) comes about with the oversimplification and stereotyping of one or more traits and labelling the place as of belonging to certain nature. The monstrous is a categorization of a nature of being.

Places and spaces are hypothesized from the world of real space relations to the symbolic realm of cultural significations (Shields, 1992, p. 47). Within the cultural signification, the necessary task of creating the accompanying meaning of place by what Shield called *"the litter of historical popular culture –postcard etc. (cultural place-images)"* is how the essential character *"of the nature"* of a place and its inhabitants is determined and organized into *"spatial routines"*[31] and territorial divisions.

Nevertheless, these *human settlements* are judged to be a threat to the survival of the purity of the metropolis. They represent the permanence of illegal encampment on land invasions becoming informal permanent settlements. For the upper class of the metropolis, they represent an encroachment by the unsightly unsanitary nature that the settlements represent. They are deemed to be a monstrous display of precarious dwellings made of refuse. The informal settlements present a threat to private property, a disfigurement of the homogeneity of the architectural landscape of the metropolis, an invasion of unsightliness, disorganization and the informal

[31] Spatial routines are the inherited social behaviours that the marginalized adopt to move in the metropolis as subaltern citizens. A mode of social camouflage and invisibility to avoid confrontations with the authority forces.

aesthetics of the lower classes into the legitimate national culture, and a destabilizing intrusion to the hegemony of the metropolis's economic and political power.

The preoccupation of the metropolitan upper class is with the government officials, who are seen to be in a cohort with the populist practices of settlement informality and illegal land speculators. The official discourse of urban renewal and private property rights for the informal settlements are empty political rhetoric for re-election campaign publicity.

The response from the centre of the metropolis, the affluent middle to upper classes and the politicians that serve this constituency, is to view with extreme suspicion these human settlements and the politics that surround them.

The discourse of temporality of the *land invasions, informal settlements*, and of the permanence of the on-site communities, the *"precarious monstrosity"*[32] of the lives of the people dwelling in these human settlements are continuously to be thought as a social blemish from one side of the political spectrum – the metropolitan upper class – and as political capital from another side of politics.

The materiality of these dwellings comes to the forefront as types of material designate a type *"definitive incompleteness"* (Sarlo, 2009), or a form of nascent permanence. From cardboard and plastic to wood and corrugated tin, to bricks and mortar, the temporality of informal settlements has become an issue as these informal settlements grow into satellite exurbs of the metropolis and become the

[32] Beatriz Sarlo judges as "precarious monstrosity" the abject social conditions that are already constitutive of the city and not fleeting (Gago, 2017; 179).

economic power centres in the informal economy of the city and country. The *"logic of the unfinished"* (Sarlo, 2009, p. 179) manifested in these informal settlements maintains an instability that cannot establish clear, hard boundaries. The monstrous constructs the city, *"the city of the poor"*, with the ever-present threat that this city of the poor will spill over towards the metropolis, devouring it in its aesthetics of the monstrous.

At issue is the confrontation between the image of the city and the structural composition of the city. Precariousness and temporality are tied together in the discourse of permanence and ownership, which is tied to the question of who has the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968; Appadurai and Holston, 1996; Harvey, 2008; Mitchell, 2003; Soja, 2010). The parasitic city (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999) in the contemporary economies of consumer capitalism needs for its survival the exurbs of the city of the poor. The informal human settlements are preserved because these are the fields for extraction of cheap labour and a localized trapped consumer market. Therefore, the geographic confinement is maintained while simultaneously denounced as parasitic.

The recognition of informality as a legitimate form of living promotes the articulation of demands and of organizational dynamics. The political empowerment and engagement of the residents goes from having no rights under informality, to acquiring rights as user and participants on the political. A *"politics of place"* (Harcourt and Escobar, 2005) starts with the composition of political collectives. When the informal human settlement becomes a proper name – a place – then it becomes a *"site of enunciation, a way of marking or outlining a territory, but also its projection onto the city as a form of resisting confinement"* (Sarlo, 2009, p. 187).

Such is the danger seen by the ruling class of tossing political power to the enormity of the populations growing in the peripheries of the city. If these populations attain political power the privileged political position of the ruling class could be at stake. Thus, the expansion of informality and the ever-continuous presence of temporality as a de facto status are favoured for the ruling class. Otherwise, with permanence of residence, ownership of property and with the formality of urban planning, social and political rights come to these disfranchised populations. Thus, to safeguard the continuation of political oligarchies, informality has to be kept as a monstrous character and a threat to civil society.

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5.4. *Viveza criolla*, the practice of informality.

In the social tectonics of the site of the marginalized communities in Latin America, *viveza criolla* is an instrument of survival and a way of life. In all decisions and observations the artist/architect must be aware that the subjects living in marginalized communities are not passive observers, they are not a silent audience, users or consumers. *Viveza* is a vernacular modus operandi of the everyday life and social consciousness that enables behaviours of resistance by taking advantage of all cracks left on the hegemonic system. It signifies a silent and coded re-signification between the sharp divisions of political alienation of the permanent *political subjects* – those who adopt and carry out the decisions –, and the others – the marginalized, who are permanently the *political objects*, solicited only for their

declaration of alliance to the decisions, and in appeal to their conformity to behave according to them.

The artist/architect must be aware that the objects of their social practices have a distinct consciousness and practices of epistemic resistance to the oppressive and exploitative methods of the society that rules over them. These are manifested through language codes, and disruptive manners of social behaviours, and ethics that the marginalized have conceived in their everyday life to survive and even thrive in the imposed conditions of abject poverty, disfranchisement and marginalization.

Artists/architects, social agents, and activists have to be aware of their prejudicial social baggage. The images and assumptions that NGO's and other third-sector organizations have created of the poor as helpless, innocent and ignorant are not necessarily true.

NGO's and third- sector organizations depend on stereotyping poor marginalized communities and on the *interpassivity*[33] of most people to support their presence and projects using the key words of *participation*, *decentralization* and *associationalism* (Kallman and Clark, 2016) to gain the trust and to appear to be *inclusive* and *democratic*. By the same token, both the words *inclusive* and *democratic* are part of the common lexicon of the third sector, the state and private

[33] Slavoj Zizek uses the term *interpassivity* to describe the belief and attitude present when people assume that they are actually participating and contributing – "making a difference" – by clicking a button on an online petition, adding their name or commenting on an online blog.
Zizek explains: "You think you are active, while your true position, as embodied in the fetish, is passive" (Zizek, 1997).

interest, when the goal is to legitimized a project by publicness to generate trust and legitimacy by *public*.

These communities have been violently repressed, alienated, expelled, and exploited for centuries. They have created ways of life that have permitted them to survive in the most of abject conditions of poverty and violence.

The artist/architect must take into account *viveza* as the vernacular modus operandi of epistemic, economic, and political resistance of the disfranchised poor of Latin America, before constructing any design program on their social practices.

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5.4.1. The disruptive tactics of the marginalized: *el vivo*.

> *"El vivo es el pícaro violento y curtido de malicia tropical".*
> *("El vivo is the violent rogue seasoned by tropical malice")*.
> (Massiani, 1962).

The *pícaro* is the rogue individualist that works at the margins of society's systems and institutions of law and order; *el vivo* infiltrates, traverses and discontinuous the flow of rules and law towards his/her own advantage.

Viveza criolla (Massiani,1962). is a term used informally across many countries in Latin America. It is used derogatorily by the upper classes to name what they call *a vernacular amoral behaviour* that belongs to the anomie of the poorest uneducated class*. Viveza* can be described as a type of rogue attitude and 'laissez-faire feeling' towards authority that common people exploit by taking illegal or inappropriate advantages by circumventing, bending, and/or breaking with the formalities of

proper social behaviour, and the rule of law. It is a form of informality that dominates the everyday life of the poor in order to survive in the "good" society that governs the social, legal and political life systems where they live. Asef Bayat (2010) called this *"quiet encroachment".* He encountered the same social phenomena in Middle Eastern societies. Bayat described *"quiet encroachment"* as the *"silent, protracted, but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied, powerful, or the public, in order to survive and improve their lives"* (Bayat, 2010).

V*iveza* seems also to be an impulse of wisdom very connected to the organic being, something that acts and ends in a flash of intuition, leaving aside any trace of true comprehension and useful knowledge. *El vivo* is the individual who carries the implicit underlying sense of intentionality and a tendency to be strictly utilitarian. *El vivo* is an anarchist who rebels against the established order because he can better operate in this way (Massiani, 1962).

Viveza, on the other hand, is taken by the lower classes of disadvantaged peoples as a wise ruse to trick the system, to take from the rich to benefit oneself. As the poor people see it, it is a kind of poetic justice. They see the upper class in perennial control of the government and jurisprudence by a continually reproducing system of legacy of social and political connections, where the "right people" inherit their social positioning within an oligarchy. The common people are clearly aware of how the rich, the well connected and the powerful manage the system to continue to enrich themselves by continually reshaping the rules of the system towards their own benefit. Legitimizing their own corrupt behaviours by manipulating the jurisprudence, and criminalizing the behaviour of the poor by creating laws, ethics

and morals that benefit them. Michel De Certeau posited something to this point, when he framed *"The tactics of consumption, the indigenous ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices"* (De Certeau, 1984, p. xvii).

El vivo exists in all situations of marginality as the one who takes advantage of the colonizer. As a tactic of resistance, *viveza* relies on unbounded individualism, to the point of being anti-communal, selfish and self-serving at a cost not only of the hegemonic state but also to his own "community". The relationship of *el vivo* with the community is complex as *viveza* is a tactic that can be individual and selfish but also communal. When electricity is "stolen" from the private or state utilities company to provide for the whole settlement, *viveza* can be seen as a way of "poaching". As De Certeau presented: *"Every life invents itself by poaching in countless ways on the property of others"* (De Certeau, 1984, p. xii). When this "poaching" is done by the upper class, it is called appropriation, with an artistic demeanour of cultural enforcement of the normative ways of social absorption. But when it is done by the outsider – the marginal, the poor, the other, the darker-skinned – then it is *viveza* and poaching. The illegality and immorality impressed in these terms of *viveza* and poaching are demonstrative of the abjection upper-class society has on the poor. The "poacher", *el vivo*, thus becomes an agent of distrust, not a figure of rebellious resistance or romantic notions of revolution and empowerment. *El vivo* is described as a parasite of society, a person without civility, ethics and morals. The anomie of *el vivo* is further characterized as a social deviant. The abjection of *el vivo* by the upper class is sometimes shared by the people of the

poor communities, and on other occasions *el vivo* is celebrated as a sort of Robin Hood character.

A response from the marginalized to the culture imposed by the "elites" that produces the epistemology of legitimization in the forms of the language, signs and symbols that they cannot read is in the *"tricks in the arts of doing"* (De Certeau, 1984). These "tricks" enable the marginalized individual subjected to constraints of modern urban society to deflect them, to manipulate them to make use of them in reinventing her own everyday practice of being.

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5.4.2. The inferiority of race.

There is a consciousness of inferiority ingrained by the processes of colonization into the colonized mind. These processes marked the populations of the colonized countries by racializing them into hierarchical categories of whiteness versus indigenous. These are categories of pureness that segregated the indigenous population from the settler populations.

The colonizer imposed the social classification of "race"[34] to all colonized peoples to forge what continues to be the actual pattern of power in capitalist society today (Quijano, 2000). This became the universal logic and method applied to all populations worldwide to legitimize the exploitation and extraction of resources,

[34] Quijano (2000) makes clear that he considers the division of society by gender to be the oldest system of domination.

labour and bodies from the colonized world. The Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano argued *"race is surely the most efficient instrument of social domination produced in the last 500 years"* (Quijano, 2007, p. 45). Quijano added that race became the categorizing instrument of the colonizer to produce *"new historical social identities"*: criollo, *mestizos*, Indian, black, *mulatos*, etc. Thus, *"race became the fundamental criterion"* that enabled the colonizer to construct a new map of the world's population dividing the populations by *"rank, places, and roles in the new society's structure of power"* (Quijano, 2000, p. 535).

European science legitimized the superiority of the European race over all others (Vandana, 1999; Quijano, 2000; Puwar, 2004). The production of evidence became the cornerstone of historical truth (Spivak, 1988; Said, 1993; Bhabha, 1994). The new science of biology produced the necessary evidence for the foundations of the invention of race, and thus provided the justifications for the colonial domination over inferior races.

In this new-world geography of power, the colonized were left with a pervasive consciousness of inferiority that infused all life experiences and relationships of the colonized in the *colonial world-system of globalized capitalism* (Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992; Grosfoguel, 2002). This has left an indelible mark in how the colonized thinks and feels of him/herself. There is no permanent way possible to describe how the colonized *"feels of him/herself"*, as its condition is dynamically dependent on the mutations of the *world-system of globalized capitalism.* Thus, here a Derridean *sous rature*, "under erasure" is needed. As Spivak wrote: *"Since*

the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible" (Spivak, 1988, p. xiv).

The idea of how the colonized *"feels of him/herself"* is a transitory concept, especially as the meaning is so relational, as it evolves differently with every passing generation. Even more conspicuous is that this text is being written by "the author" of this thesis, who is inevitably characterizing all experiences of the marginalized from his privileged social positioning of a white male Latin-American petite bourgeois. From my perspective, there are no clear definitions to be stated as truths – and if one is presented as truth, it should be taken with suspicion. Fanon argued that in the process of colonization *"the colonized acquire a peculiar visceral intelligence dedicated to the survival of body and spirit"* (Fanon, 1963, p. 16). This character of survival is what is called *viveza*.

In time *viveza* became an ingrained national practice of resistance against the colonizer. After the colonizers were gone these practices continue as part of everyday life and the larger project of *coloniality*[35]*.* To this, Sayak Valencia argued that the *"ethics in the Third Word, more than a process, are an in situ action"* (Valencia, 2018, p. 116). Thus *viveza* is part of a national character that is still

[35] *Coloniality* is a transposed method of representation. It explains the systemic organization of capital, knowledge, race, social and behavioral interactions between axial definitions of the global patterns between a hegemonic power and the subordinate subaltern global consumer (the colonized).
Thus, *coloniality* is a continuation of the colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations.(Grosfoguel, 2002)
This term was coined by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano as part of the theory of the *Coloniality of Power* (Quijano, 1998) . It refers to a crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world-system that articulates peripheral locations in the international division of labor, subaltern group political strategies, and Third World migrants' inscription in the racial/ ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities (Grosfoguel, 2002).

confronting its passage to modernity, while still carrying all the baggage left from colonization.

But *viveza* in one form or another is a global way that the poor and disfranchised of the world deal with their everyday subsistence. Fanon wrote:

> *"Deep down the colonized subject knows no authority. He is dominated but not domesticated. He is made to feel inferior, but by no means convinced of his inferiority. He patiently waits for the colonialist to let down his guard and then jumps on him"* (Fanon, 1963, p. 16).

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It is necessary for the artist and architect who are working in the site of the marginalized to realize the power asymmetries already implicit by his/her own phenotype. The history of colonial relationships is imbued in the body of the artist and architect as figures of expert and professional agency, but principally as figures belonging to the phenotype of the colonizer; these links cannot be omitted. To omit historical differences and power asymmetries for the apparent sake of conviviality further sediments such asymmetries as an acceptable given reality. Artists and architects have the responsibility to be aware of the political history of the site and to the prejudicial advantages of their own phenotype. Otherwise, the audience of the marginalized will, as Fanon said, *jump on him.*

This type of perspective error from the artist and the architect when intervening with their work in poor marginalized communities has the common detrimental outcome of the community not accepting the work as part of their place. The word "intervention" which is commonly used in art and architecture's social practices does imply a de facto state of the site as wrong or ill and in need of an intervention.

Examples abound of projects being abandoned, vandalized and destroyed by the same people that they were supposedly built for. La Casa del Viento (2017), a project of social architecture designed to be a communal library by the atelier Arquitectura Expandida in San Cristobal, Bogotá, Colombia was burnt as result of a dispute between community members. In this particular case the architects of Arquitectura Expandida failed to recognize the political and social complexity of the community. The architects that composed the atelier Arquitectura Expandida are from Spain and Belgium; although by the time they designed La Casa del Viento they had been residing and working in Bogotá for a few years, they still maintained a romantic notion of the poor and marginalized community as needy, simple and naïve. Their work was seen by part of the community as an unwelcome "intervention" that favoured part of the community while not recognizing the political power of the community board.

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The site for artists and architects' socio-spatial practices is an imaginary socio-political construction of bits and pieces of stereotypes and beliefs about who the poor, disfranchised and marginalized are, what their needs are, and who should help them. The site is constructed as a landscape of necessity, an assemblage of social politics, and publicity, where the artist and architects are positioned as social catalyst and agents of good. From this perspective the artist and architect become colonizer agents from Americo-European ethical and moral positions.

Chapter 6. The syncretic practice.

This chapter explores a critical deconstruction of artists' and architects' practices in the site of marginalized communities. This thesis posits that the methods and design thinking by which artists and architects intervene with their practices in the site of marginalized communities have risen from a syncretic relationship between art and architecture's theory and praxis. This syncretic practice developed by artists and architects is beneficial for both disciplines but has not been critically addressed. The expanded field (Krauss, 1979) of their theory and design practices has not been critically assessed beyond the framework of spatial practice (Rendell, 2006; Miessen and Hirsch, 2012). The lack of a critical assessment of the social tectonics of the site of practice perpetuates a colonizer's attitude and prejudicial perspective embodied by the artist and architect as social agents. In this chapter the colonizer's attitude of the artist and architect will be analysed and deconstructed into its formative elements, from traditional disciplinary practices of design thinking to the authoritative image of the artist and architect as expert, professional agent. As part of this deconstruction, it is also necessary to convey a critical analysis of the role of the public, the practices of participation, and place-making strategies utilized by artists and architects in the design program of their social practices. This chapter concludes by mapping the epistemic errors in artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices and presenting guidelines for a transformative participation for socio-spatial practices that support and enable place-making.

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6.0. Syncretism between art and architecture.

The American historian Nancy Farris said that where creative tensions arise from the combination of two distinct perspectives, from those creative tensions new insights can continue to emerge (Farris, 1986). When these tensions become visible, models for new practices can be created for people to become participants in their own processes of social engagement.

Art and architecture intersect inadvertently at times and purposely at others. The site of intersection lies on shared practices between their theoretical disciplines and on the site of their social practices. The site of the social is where these practices most often intersect and collide. Their divergences and alliances most often take form when dealing with participatory issues, agency, and authorship. It is from this site of turbulence that mixing, borrowing, appropriation, and reinvention between the social practices of art and architecture construed novel syncretic forms of action, tactics, agency, and dialogue.

Art and architecture share a kind of conflictual appreciation between them. These two practices where disjointed by professionalization and artificial cognitive gaps imposed by academic disciplinary subdivisions. Nevertheless, in the site of the social both practices acknowledge their advantages and shortcomings. When artists and architects expanded their practices outside and beyond the traditions of the built object of architecture and the artwork, and moved outside the institutions of the gallery, museum, university, and design/artist's studio, the blurriness between the boundaries of the two disciplines of art and architecture became entwined into an "accidental" syncretism as practice. Luca Tateo and Giuseppina Marsico (2014)

described *syncretism* as *"an epistemological stance that is never rejecting any emerging or potential new idea because it belongs to a different "specie" or "perspective"* (Tateo and Marsico, 2014).

The Dutch visual artist and curator Jeanne van Heeswijk (2012) argued that we should stop thinking of autonomy and instrumentalization of art and architecture as oppositional features. Van Heeswijk states that nowadays *"autonomy and instrumentalization are no longer opposite strategies"* (Van Heeswijk, 2012, p. 78). Van Heeswijk in her own social artworks explores the syncretic space between art and architecture as instruments for social regeneration. Van Heeswijk describes her practice as *"collaborative production"*; long-scale community-embedded projects between people involved in processes of urban development that question art's autonomy. An example of a syncretic practice is the methodology in her ongoing project based in Morocco, *"QANAT: a training for the not yet"* built together with artistic platform LE 18. The project is presented as a "*training course and a platform"* for people of Marrakech to *"share memories and wishes and then develop new ideas, inspired by the traditional water culture"* (Van Heeswijk, 2020). Van Heeswijk sees her work as a platform to strategically connect different actors to enable social change.

The German architect and writer Markus Miessen notes that *"the venturing out of both the notion of expertise and discipline is crucial in order to remain sufficiently curious towards the specialized knowledges of others"* (Miessen, 2010, p. 196). The "*specialized knowledges of others"* that Miessen speaks of, come from the voices of the inhabitants of the site, the marginalized uneducated poor. To open the

specialized practice of architecture and art to these voices is to foment an epistemology of justice and solidarity that is never positioned as static or hegemonic. Thus, fomenting the construction of knowledge through the complementary views from professional and expert knowledge from architecture and art, together with vernacular knowledge from the voices of the inhabitants of the site – and hence creating a syncretic epistemology.

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Architecture as a multifaceted discipline has been tied to the construction of the social environment. The design of architecture's spatial interventions, social engagement, and "social architecture" paradigms has been regarded as *"a cure-all for the field of architecture: as an instrument, tool, or operating device that can transform, as if by magic, this loathed discipline into one that is relevant to the overall development of society"* (Schneider, 2013, p. 250).

This shift took hold in art and architecture social practices at the beginning of the 1990s as ideas on participatory design, human-centred design, and a more inclusive pedagogy started to be developed and included in academic curricula. In the design and action for social participatory strategies is where art and architecture met in a syncretic relationship.

Since the late 1960s, the ideas explored by Cedric Price, Paul Barker, Reyner Banham and Peter Hall in their 1969 article "Non-Plan: an Experiment in Freedom", where they argued that people should be allowed to shape the environment they want to live and work in. This postulate went against the grain of formal architecture practice and pedagogy. Ideas such as Price's *"anticipatory architect"*, in which the

general public could determine, control and shape their own surroundings, together with Price's architecture of *"calculated uncertainty"*, were time-based urban intervention tactics that were influential in promoting alternative design practices in architecture and art.

Other experiments on a new type of social architecture were simultaneously occurring: for example the inflatable forms designed by the Archigram group, and the utopian geodesic domes of Buckminster Fuller of 1968. Other groups as Superstudio's *Continous Monument*, 1969, Ant Farm and the Merry Pranksters were taking transdisciplinary approaches from art, architecture and social activism in the utopian spirit of revolutionary social change at the end of the 1960s. During this epoch of the late 1960s, art and architecture started to share and develop a syncretism in their social praxis. Situationism as an art praxis appeared as a plastic development from the ideologies and practices of the Lettrist International (1952–57). Their critique of modern urbanism and architecture, together with the praxis of unitary urbanism, influenced the development of situationism until the writings of Guy Debord (1967) took situationism into a different social critique. Nevertheless, the beginnings of a syncretic practice between art and architecture had its modern origins in the social architecture and participatory art movements of the late 1960s. This syncretic practice continues as a feedback loop in the projects of socially engaged art and architecture that have become ubiquitous since the mid-90s. Both art and architecture settled their sights on these participatory socially engaged projects in the site of the most disfranchised. Artists and architects want to distinguish themselves as being "*agents of change"* for the betterment of life in poor and marginalized communities., and by the same token legitimize their practices as

a social good.

The architectural historian, cultural critic and art writer Jane Rendell (2003) identified these spaces between art and architecture as places of the social, the place of dialogue and ongoing discussion. Rendell argues that the social space created by the intersections between art and architecture's social interventions and projects converse into what Rendell coined as *critical spatial practice* (Rendell, 2003). Rendell saw these projects as located in between art and architecture, not completely belonging to either discipline but instead located in*"a triple crossroads: between theory and practice, between public and private, and between art and architecture"* (Rendell, 2006). What Rendell defined as *critical spatial practice,* becomes more of a critical theoretical perspective from where to identify syncretisms between these two practices. A place where the borrowing, appropriation, influence, and co-optation of techniques and practices between the artist and architect in the terrain of the social are amalgamated into a modus operandi for a social practice.

Since the late 1960s, projects of syncretic nature between art, architecture, and social activism have been continuously reinvented. The works of the San Francisco-based collective Ant Farm, 1968 (Chip Lord, Doug Michels, and Curtis Schreier), explored the intersection of architecture, design and media art, in a series of interventions aiming towards a critique of the North American's capitalist culture of mass media and consumerism. Also the works of the artists' group Anarchitecture based in New York, 1974 (Laurie Anderson, Tina Girouard, Carol Goodden, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Bernard Kirschenbaun, Richard Landry, Richard Nonas, and the architecturally trained artist Gordon Matta Clark). Their syncretic practice

combined a political critique of contemporary culture and architecture as a capitalist mode of production. Anarchitecture's production of artworks remained limited to photographs, documentation and small temporal social interventions. Later on there were Gordon Matta Clark's building carvings in the Bronx, New York City (1972–75), and the project *Reality Propenies: Fake Estates* (1973), which consisted of buying tiny slivers of unbuildable sometimes inaccessible and unseen land. Art critic Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois described these land acquisitions as having *"no use value whatsoever and only a purely nominal exchange value: these are fake commodities, fake real estate properties"* (Krauss and Bois, 1997, p. 226). This was Matta Clark's critique on the American dream of private ownership. Another project by Matta Clark, *Food* (1971–73), which was not part of Anarchitecture's oeuvre, was an artist-run restaurant. It was considered to be both a business and an *artistic intervention*. This work was a precursor of the type of social interventions where art and architecture blurred distinctions with social activism and everyday life. These types of projects will eventually coalesce into the socially engaged art and architecture practices of the 1990s that influenced today's social practices.

The syncretic practices resulting from the intersections of art, architecture, and the social has continued to blur the divisions between the social action of community activism and the social intervention of an artist/architect. The art critic Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) presented the artist's role as a *"social catalyst"* for social action. Bourriaud celebrated the works of social action of artists like Rirkrit Tiravanija of the early-1990s, which involved cooking meals inside the gallery to feed the audience.

Art and architecture had been appropriating tactics and forms from community activism since the early 60s. Then, these appropriations were seen as artists and

architects being socially responsible and politically conscious of the effects their disciplines had on maintaining the status quo of capitalist society. A feeling of change towards the dismantlement of hegemonic power from the state and institutions of education was the driving force behind the works artists and architects explored during the 60s and 70s. A sense of a vanguardist transformative practice was what empowered artists and architects to seek with their works to change the capitalist paradigm of consumerist-driven audience towards a social engagement of a politically conscious public. Such practices denounced the mythical autonomy of art – the *l'art pour l'art* romanticism of the artist as a being independent of society. The social practices of art and architecture of the 60s and 70s exposed that the *"view that art's independence from society exists only in the artist's imagination"* and *"that autonomy is a historically condition phenomenon* [... the autonomy of art] *is a mere illusion"* (Bürger, 1984, p. 35).

The revival of early-90s social works as works of art created controversy within the establishment of art and architecture institutions. Many initially critiqued the syncretic practices as mere appropriations of social activism dressed as art, before embracing the new syncretic practices as means to re-legitimize the institutions of art and architecture. An example was artist Tania Bruguera's work *Immigrant Movement International* (2011), which was applauded as an effective work of social art in solidarity with the immigrant community of Queens, New York City. The same work was also criticized as an opportunistic appropriation of the work that social activists do for immigrant communities. Another work that deals directly with the plight of immigrant communities comes from architect Sana Murrani's *Creative*

Recovery: Mapping Refugees' Memories of Home as Heritage (2018). These works navigate the social complexities of syncretic practices and the academic criticism of ethical vs. aesthetic considerations of the work (Bishop, 2006). Other works have also been critiqued as opportunist and exploitative of the social conditions of the people that are included as users/participants. The uncritical intervention of artists and architects in the site of marginalized communities has been described as colonialist in purpose and meaning (Dornoff, et al, 2018; Farago, 2020).

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6.0.1. Syncretism in technology.

Nowadays, the use of advance digital technologies in art and architecture has become ubiquitous. Artist and architects have always been keen to take advantage of new materials, techniques and technologies to explore, and expand their own practices. Hence, the convergence of technologies between these two disciplines creates another intersectional modus operandi. As both practices feed off each other on the possibilities of technology, a novel syncretic site of knowledge and practices with digital, interactive, and telecommunication technologies emerged in the early 90s.

Two distinct examples of these syncretic practices can be seen in the contradictions between the works of Dutch artist Daan Roosegaarde and architect Philip Beesley. Roosegaarde's practice focuses on the use of technology to create works that can be simultaneously considered artworks and architecture. Roosegaarde develops projects that merge technology and art in urban environments. His works *Van Gogh Path* (2012), an illuminated sidewalk, and the

artwork *Yes But Chair* situate his practice in a way he describes thus: *"the role of the artist is to be a happy infiltrator […] to connect with dreams, with craftsmanship [...] to make new things happen"* (Roosegaarde, 2015). The public nature of the works, and the artist's intentions for the works to be used as instruments for the social betterment of the everyday life of the inhabitants and transients of the spaces transformed by his works, place the works as social practice. On the other hand, Philip Beesley's practice as an architect was transformed in the mid-1990's when he started to construct large-scale interactive art installations (*Palatine Burial Installation*, 1996; *Hylozoic Soil: Meduse Field*, 2010). The positive publicity that his practice as an artist received was much greater than he got as an architect. The diminishing work for architects in the mid-90s, and the eventual economic meltdown of the early 2000s, meant for most architects an almost overnight disappearance of design and construction projects. Philip Beesley took the opportunity to use his architecture design training together with the use of CAD, CNC, and 3D printing technologies to design reactive, technologically driven, beautiful decorative quasi sci-fi organisms to be presented as art installations, what he named *"responsive environments"*. The lure of the new, together with the undeniable mesmerizing beauty of his installations, brought him fame as an architect/artist. Beesley's work illustrates the vacillating perspective when trying to define and place in context for the works that result from syncretic practices. Beesley's *Hylozoic Ground* work was defined as interactive architecture when it was published in Michael Fox and Miles Kemp's book *Interactive Architecture* (2009). In another book, edited by Robert Klanten, Sven Ehmann and Verena Hanschke, *A Touch of Code* (2011), Beesley's *Hylozoic Ground* is contextualized as art.

The pairing of art and architecture with technology has not been free of criticism. The Italian architect Giancarlo De Carlo argued that "*The very school for the preparation of architects was born out of an ambiguous coupling of art and technology, destined inevitably to generate a sterile species"* (De Carlo, 2005). Nevertheless, the trend continuous as new technologies and new sites of practice offer the young artist and architect a place of their own to develop their own professional practice.

The art critic and writer Hal Foster said, "*Not long ago, a near prerequisite for vanguard architecture was an engagement with theory; lately it has become an acquaintance with art"* (Foster, 2011, p. vii)*.* Nowadays, Foster's statement goes beyond architecture's engagement with art as a necessary ingredient for a vanguardist practice. Today, it is a question not only of economic survival and panache of the architect, but more importantly of the legitimacy of the practice of architecture. When engineers are legally allowed to approve and sign architectural plans, thus threatening the hegemony of the architect as agent of expert knowledge, architecture finds itself in a race to deconstruct the practice and to redefine what architecture is.

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6.1. The colonizer methodological gap.

> *"You never look at me from the place from which I see you"*
>
> (Lacan, 1978).

The colonizer's perspective is the colonizer's own *cognitive trap.* For Fredric Jameson (1990), the whole of the everyday life is completely colonized, to the point that it is impossible to have *"any direct cognition of the world"*. It is as the picture in Lacan's fisherman story (1978). The metaphor of the *"tin"* in Lacan's story is not about what it is not seen by the *"tin"*; it is about what is not seen from the place of the colonizer – the agent, the artist, architect, who is the historical subject *(the political subject)*. The ones who are *"out of place in the picture"* are the subjected inhabitants of the marginalized places *(the political objects)*.

The Lacanian gaze is about what we desire to see – *appearance* – and not about what is actually there. The question remains, from whose eyes are we seeing? Those of the colonizer or of the colonized? Is it that to gaze is only possible from the perspective of privileged power? Or is it that the marginalized can only be object to the gaze, never the subject?

> *"We gaze because we are lured by the medium to see what it is it wishes us to see, by covering what is actually there"* (Geiger, 2003).

Who chooses and manipulates the medium? The relationship between the eye and the gaze is political, engendered in power relations between the subject and the subjected. This is far beyond Marshall McLuhan's (1964) subjectivity between of the message and the medium. When power relations are involved a Foucaultian sense

of translation and interpretation invade all intersubjective relationships.

The colonizer's gaze is what it is desired to be seen and to be made public, and invisibilizes what is actually there, physically and in context of social power relations. What it is seen by the eye is the colonizer's construct of aesthetics and affects of his dominant culture. We are made to gaze because we are lured or confused (Baudrillard, 1981) by the universal desires of the medium of consumer society. To desire what it is, it wishes us to desire, to consume the appropriate items of social recognition and social camouflage (Leach, 2006). Not by coveting what is actually there, but instead by camouflaging the many alternatives that exist on the *menu of choice*, and only contextualizing as desirable the ones that are appropriate to sustain the status quo of the reigning hegemonic power.

The perverse ubiquity of this myopic social perspective is why methodological gaps are evident in many projects that have been developed from what it is generally known today as socially engaged art and social architecture. These are initiatives where the role and purpose of the artwork or the architecture is supposedly created in participation or collaboration with the public. Nevertheless, the questions of social engagement, contested space, and cultural hegemony, especially when working with marginalized populations, are still undefined. The architect Teddy Cruz (2012) points towards this methodological gap when he questions how artists, architects and communities are going to create an effective project that could enable an institutional transformation, beyond the institutional patches that governments, NGOs and other third-sector organizations'[36] sponsor for the

[36] Third sector organizations refers to NGOs, NPOs, CSOs, and INGOs.

temporary relief of social and economic problems affecting these communities.

These organizations appear to fill a “social gap” left by neglect, corruption, bureaucracy and ineptitude of the state. As the state recoils from their social obligations and welfare of the “public”, the political space is open for instalment of third-sector organizations to fulfil the gap left by the state. These gaps left by the state, which are publicized as socio-economic need, are fulfilled by these actors not only at the socio-economic level but ideologically and politically as well. The gap is created by the cognitive blindness to the ineffectiveness of participatory and collaboration strategies in the design planning of social projects. From government agencies to independent artists’ and architects’ projects, the limited and prejudicial perspective caused by the experience error implicit in the colonizer’s gaze keeps government social agencies, planning boards, third-sector NGO’s and artists and architects in a self-referential feedback loop of self-congratulatory efficiency discourse.

> *“I emphasize effective project because what we need is a more functional set of operations that can reconnect art to the urgency of everyday and the re-thinking of its institutions”* (Cruz, 2012).

The institutions, Cruz is referring to the states’ legitimizing institutions of power: juridical, legislative and cultural institutions that delineate what is the proper allowed behaviour and what is not. These are the same bureaucratic institutional offices of the governments that are in charge to delineate the cultural, the health and the social relationships that are deemed appropriate and valuable. The same institutions that legitimize what is *“good taste”* and what is not, decide what is appropriate behaviour and what is not – in this way, legitimizing the taste, politics, morals and ethics of the ruling class.

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6.2. The colonizer.

Franz Fanon argued that it was *"the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject"* (Fanon, 1969, p. 2). The question that arises is: by intervening in theory and praxis with the social space dynamics of communities, especially in the case of poor marginalized and disfranchised communities, are the artist/architect, with their implicit agency in their role as professional expert, reproducing the ideologies and practices of subordination that have constituted these communities as marginalized? Henri Lefebvre posited that space is a social construction (Lefebvre, 1991). When artists/architects intervene in the social space dynamics of a community's place, they are intervening in the socio-political dynamics of the community; and of the community's relationship with the state, other private actors, NGOs, and third-sector organizations that are engaged with the management of the community's infrastructure: water, waste disposal, education, electric utilities, health, and transportation. The place of influence that the artist/architect has as expert agents must be analysed with great care. The practices with which artists and architects engage with communities' places of dwelling as sites for their projects and interventions must be carefully and intersectionally rethought. The design thinking of social engagement and participatory practices are to be constitutive of social life. Thus, it is paramount that the artist/architect, in their eagerness to collaborate with communities, does not fall into the epistemic ignorance of essentially reproducing the power dynamics that have exploited and sedimented the conditions of subordination of the marginalized. The power of expert knowledge that the artist/architect possesses does give them

an a priori hierarchical positioning within these communities. How the artist/architect chooses to utilize this power/knowledge axis lies in whether their practices reproduce the traditional monolithic interpretation of power as repressive, or reinterpret the power asymmetries between them and their audience/user. Foucault said that power *"needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression"* (Foucault, 1980). Hence the theory and praxis of participation and social engagement and collaboration from the design thinking perspective of the artist/architect must be engaged from an *ecology of knowledge* (Bateson, 1972) and an *intersectional perspective* (Crenshaw, 1991) in their design thinking. Lefebvre argued that *"theory opens the road, clears a new way; practice takes it, it produces the route and the space"* (Lefebvre, 1978). Hence it is important for the social practice to be engaged with socio-political theory. Otherwise, their role as agents for social engagement might be compromised by unwittingly becoming Albert Memmi's (1969) third category of colonialism's social actors: the *interpreter agent* between colonialism's institutions and the colonized.

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When the artist/architect enters the field of the social, they are entering a field of contested definitions of epistemic authority and legitimacy. These definitions legitimize the asymmetries of power in society between class, gender, and race.

These contestations are vectorized by the state and the upper class towards the reproduction of the condition of marginalization of these communities. Other contestations arise from the marginalized communities towards the state, and yet

others from the marginalized communities towards themselves. The artist/architect must be careful to know who they serve. Fanon said that when the colonized starts adopting the cultural means of the dominant culture, *"He becomes whiter"* (Fanon, 1952, p. 18).

The space in between the contestations of the site – the place of the marginalized community – is where the artist/architect is positioned by her practice. The liminality of such space makes it a site of paradoxical and dialectical configurations between the artist/architect and her praxis.

These are turbulent spaces where the artist/architect must navigate where colonization has left a legacy of injustices between the colonizer and the colonized. These are the spaces of informal settlements and economies at the outskirts of the metropolitan city that Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen and Maria Mies (1999, p. 150) have named the "new enclosures" (p. 150) of capitalism. The Argentinian sociologist Veronica Gago (2017) has also identified these spaces as sites of informal commerce and dwelling. *The Villa*, Gago (2017, p. 187) posited is the site of the informal economic structure of the marginalized communities, but also a liminal space between the formal economy of the metropolis and the informality of the periphery. Thus, the sites of informality are categorized by images of monstrosity fabricated and publicized from the ruling class to demonize these communities as threats to formal society; aesthetically by their informal architectural constructions, economically by their ever-growing power of their informal markets, and racially by their composition of poor indigenous migrants. Therefore, artists and architects can exploit the image of the benevolent colonizer, as in the *"Manichean allegory"*, where racial and cultural differences were transformed into *"moral and even metaphysical*

difference" (JanMohamed, 1985, p. 201) between the colonizer and the colonized; or they can act against it by recognizing the asymmetries of power of the sites where they chose to intervene.

The artist/architect in their epistemic agency can transgress the colonizer/colonized dialectic, and attempt to pass over to the other's side. Nevertheless, Ali Behdad posits that the *"binaries of colonizer/colonized, sacrificer/sacrificed is illusory, however, because his identity is already inscribed in such a hierarchical relation"* (Behdad, 1997, p. 207). Such is the conflictual position of the artist/architect when using the marginalized community as site for her practice.

It is important to note that solutions to this dialectic of the artist/architect colonizer are often thought to lie in the geographic immersion of the artist/architect into the other's community. Thus, appearing to legitimize the artist/architect's epistemic authority by camouflaging under the guise of the local. Nevertheless, the artist/architect as the hidden colonizer can finally penetrate the other's space in what Behdad called *"a climax to the érotisme des coeurs"* (Behdad, 1997, p. 206). The reference here is to J. M. Coetzee's 1980 novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, where Coetzee charts out the violent topography of *"colonial eroticism"*. This time the artist/architect is not after the exotic body of the colonized but after the ideological legitimacy being close to these bodies gives her. By this closeness the artist/architect legitimizes her experience of social practices as being *"good agents"* of social change, instead of an extractivist colonizer. The extractivist colonizer extracts from the site: legitimacy, knowledge, labour, and bodies that would be appropriated into the production of his own social capital.

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6.3. The artist as ethnographer.

The art critic and writer Hal Foster (1996) argued that there has been a sense of *"old envy"* between artists and anthropologists. There was a time in Western academic art institutions that the relationship of the artist with the world around them was thought of from the perspective of the artist as anthropologist. The artist as part of society, where she feeds from the observations of the everyday life of the "common man". It was taught that the artist needed to experience "real life" via a romantic sense of adventure and discovery. Thus, on the road to new experiences, the artist will find their own artistic self, their call, their inspiration, and their purpose. The journey will help the artist construct her thematic context for the artist's process. Foster continues to argue that *"a new ethnographer envy consumes many artists and critics"* (Foster, 1996, p. 181). From the early 1990s, the old attraction to anthropology has been turned towards the role of the ethnographer. The reason for this is that anthropology had begun to take on an image of an old discipline, reduced to passive observation, which had been lagging behind in its research techniques, reduced to text. The so-called "digital revolution" of the early 1990s brought the challenge of the end of the hegemony of text as the authoritative container of true knowledge. The explosion of the image-culture, propelled by the ubiquity of new digital telecommunications technologies, the Internet, and cheap digital imaging technology, found anthropology as well as many of the traditional humanities and social sciences disciplines at a misstep with contemporary culture and society. Anthropology moved to reinvent itself by turning to digital video

technologies and fashioning the image of the ethnographer as an active social explorer of contemporary everyday life. New practices of visual ethnography, sensory ethnography, digital ethnography (Pink, 2009a, 2009b, 2015) came to revitalize the new field of visual anthropology (Pink, 2005). Thus, left behind was the dusty images of the anthropologist working on a faraway field of native tribes or of the academic desk at an anthropology department. This new image of the active, technologically savvy social actor of the ethnographer participant-observer that favours the ethnographic present is very attractive to the artist and architect.

Art, as distinct from architecture, has always suffered from an inferiority complex in terms of the intellectual context of the artist (Foster, 2011). The image of architecture as a knowledge discipline (Salama, 2015) and the architect philosopher has been a permanent sore in the artist's ego. The image of the conceptualist artist as intellectual (Kosuth, 1993) is a very recent itineration to be included into the art market, to the point that it is not a widely popular image in academic art pedagogy, and is still resisted in many universities art curricula (Camnitzer, 2007; Elkins, 2009).

Hal Foster published his article *The Artist as Ethnographer* in 1996, following Walter Benjamin's conception of the artist's authority into cultural politics, and his call to all artists to intervene as social agents by their means of art production into the revolutionary transformation of society (Benjamin, 1968). Foster signalled the *"breakdown of restrictive definitions of art and artist"* that were happening together with the social movements of feminism, multiculturalism, queer rights and civil rights (Foster, 1996, p. 184).

The contemporary current of the 1990s for renewed social activism and politically

conscious art and artist moved artists to intervene in the expanded field of culture that was thought to be the exclusive terrain of anthropology.

The ethnographic turn by artists entailed an epistemological shift in the artist's function from *object-makers* to "*facilitators, educators, coordinators and bureaucrats*" (Kwon, 1997, p. 103). But it also conveyed a new energy and legitimization to Benjamin's (1968) revolutionary artist and Bourriaud's (2002) artist as social catalyst. The ethnographic artist demystifies the creative process by talking art to the *"man on the street",* as a means for social change.

This shift in contemporary art practice to artists using ethnography as an integral component in their social-art practice has opened a range of conflictual issues regarding the artist's relationship with experience in the field, interpretation, and artistic representation (Desai, 2002, p. 307). The social practices of these artists are seen as nomadic. Increasingly, the movement of the artist becomes as fashion personalities of a growing international art world of museums, biennials and art fairs. The sites where these artists operate are more like an itinerary than a map of work. The site is defined by the publicity and the *"network of social relations"* that makes the community an attractive public site for the artist and its sponsors (Kwon, 2004). For these artists their site can be from the banality of a billboard, to a disfranchised community, or within the institutional framework of the museum, art fair and biennale, or to the latest media fashion social cause and political debate.

The socially engaged artist moves from vanguardist social agent to opportunist commentator of current events. The artist ethnographer becomes the artist colonizer when his socially conscious and politically committed art practices

become domesticated, assimilated and fashioned into the dominant market and culture.

The opportunism of the artist is to embrace subcultural forms as subversive, thus appropriating the plight of marginalized communities as publicity. The artist/architect's inclusion of the community *"as active participants in the conceptualization and production of process-oriented, politically conscious community events or programs"* (Kwon, 2004, p. 6) is nothing more than an artifice of legitimization by "in public" participation.

Foster questions whether, in the rush for the ethnographic turn, artists, critics and curators *"have dismissed – maybe too quickly – the aesthetic autonomy of art as retrograde"* (Foster, 2002, p. 91). Many artists embraced the ethnographic turn as a means to challenge the elitist canons of the traditional art market and art institutions. Many artists thought that by changing their art process to projects as fieldwork in everyday life they were behaving revolutionarily, contesting the art-market aesthetic hegemony. Creating socially engaged artworks with participatory design strategies of *"engaging horizontally from subject to subject across social space"* (Foster, 2002, p. 91). Nevertheless, such tactics became the latest fashionable vanguardist art form of socially engaged art to be festively received by the art world as a new breath of fresh air to revitalize and legitimize their "public" institutions, museums, biennales and art fairs. The exaltation of the new, as a necessary form of obsolescence design is ingrained in the art world's reproduction of the commodification of art.

The curator Miwon Kwon (2004) argued that some key words in art-world language

have been accepted, *“embraced as an automatic signifier of ‘criticality’*" (Kwon, 2004, p. 1). In current social-art practices the mere inclusion of the words socially engaged, participatory, collaboration, community, and empowerment is uncritically accepted as legitimizing tenants of the practice. Instead of promoting their radical potential, this uncritical acceptance of these artists’ interventions, projects, artworks in the site of the social and the marginalized only keeps them open to co-option by institutional and market forces.

Kwon keenly observed that these site-specific “social practices” of interventions in the site of marginalized communities had the potential to *“exacerbate uneven power relations, remarginalize (even colonize) already disenfranchised groups, depoliticize and remythify the artistic process, and finally further the separation of art and life (despite claims to the contrary)”* (Kwon, 2004, p. 6).

To properly decolonize our social perspectives of value, and to avoid falling into culturalism and its accompanied nationalism and fundamentalism, it is imperative to deconstruct the language we use. As Audre Lorde said, *“the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house”* (1984).

The search for a decolonized social practice starts by deconstructing the Western masculinized romanticism of discovery embodied in the image of the *Robinson Crusoe artist* (Said, 1993), he who creates his own world on terra nullius. The one who saves the savage from his own cannibalism by his civilizing intervention is too closed to the practice paradigms of social art and architecture.

The first step towards this deconstruction starts with reading and seeing with suspicion the order of things in the world around us; to determine how knowledge

has been organized into closed epistemologies of domination and not open epistemologies of sharing.

Then, we can start finding the epistemic errors sedimented in artists' and architects' practices.

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6.3.1. Epistemic errors.

There are four recurrent epistemic errors in most socially engaged practices. Three are faulted to the artist/architect. The last is perpetuated by the forum of the institutions of art. The artist/architect embodies the *"insider frame"*, from which they often lack the cognitive distance to see from another perspective beyond their own, thus having what Linda Tuhiwai Smith called *"the potential to see the trees but not the forest"* (Tuhiwai, 2012, p. 210). The epistemic errors are in the practice, in the site, in the author, and by the forum.

First epistemic error: The need for help**.**

The need for help is the first epistemic mistake of the artist/architect's perspective. The assumption of marginality and disfranchisement of poor communities, and hence their need of help from outside actors, is another of the colonizer's own cognitive traps. This is what Merleau-Ponty called the *"experience error"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 5). When the agent of epistemic authority – artist/architect – assumes her own perception of events and history as a priori truth, as her own knowledge is limited to the "*horizons"* of her own prejudices, her *perceived truth* becomes her own cognitive trap and epistemic limit.

This cognitive scenario is a very straightforward characterization of many of the practices that artists/architects working in very specific social environments of the "*marginalized community"* inadvertently use. The power asymmetries between who the artist/architect is and the population that lives on the site, and the epistemic imbalances between these two spheres of social reality, are the locus of this first epistemic error.

The misunderstanding of the social dynamics of the site, about its cultural and political hierarchies of racial, ethnic, class, and gender, is the first epistemic limit the artist/architect is confronted with.

These social dynamics determine the hierarchical positioning of who is the artist/architect and who are its public, its audience, and its users, thus the beneficiaries of the artist/architect's work.

These artists/architects benefit from the informality of these communities. This allows them to develop projects that would have been difficult or impossible to develop in other formal social arenas. The bureaucracy of formal government oversight in other more developed areas will hinder the artist/architect's desires. Also, in a more formal social environment artists/architects without a developed professional career will have very little opportunity to create public works without the sponsorship of the official cultural institutions. Thus, many of these artists/architects come from better positions in society, culture, and education, and in many cases from other countries, usually more developed countries, and from a more privileged somatic norm. Nevertheless, without an established professional career and proper social connections, many of them will have little chance to

develop their professional careers in the places they come from.

The origin of the artist, where she comes from and the decision that she makes about where to work in a place of a poor community, as well as her initial reasoning of doing good, positions her, the artist/architect, as saviour. Thus perpetuating the identity prejudice of the inhabitants of the site as helpless. This prejudice, which tracks people relating to social identity (Fricker, 2007, p. 27), does have socio-political ramifications on how these communities are treated by the state and third-sector organizations. The social consequences of this identity prejudice keeps reinforcing the cultural and social stigma of the poor's anomie, giving reason to the policies that keep their communities marginalized and in a state of social abjection.

The notion of helping sounds good initially but it carries with it paternalistic overtones. Paternalism legitimizes the colonizer's *mission civilisatrice* when the artist/architect appears to be in the role of extractivist agent. Here they take advantage of their somatic and epistemic authority by parachuting into poor marginalized communities to develop their own projects using the social conditions of marginalization of the community to their advantage. First, by appearing to be agents of social good by helping the community. Second, by using the community as background for the construction of their own professional practice portfolio that will open new opportunities for them in the formal arena of the arts and architecture. It is a win-win situation for the artist/architect. For the community the result can be very different.

Thus this sort of practices only reinforces the prejudices of the colonizer-agent, who views himself as the *"active agent"* and places the colonized-user into the *"passive-*

audience" role of colonial continuity (Behdad, 1997).

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Second epistemic error: the assumption of community**.**

The second error is the assumption of community. Often, a group of people are mistakenly defined as a community by the relative conditions of sharing a common place of dwelling, a particular phenotype or shared beliefs and traditions.

Relating people by geographical territory, built environment, or intangible life-spaces of a shared consciousness is another form of *the colonizer's cognitive trap*. The intangible shared spaces can be from religious beliefs to national and diaspora ideologies of belonging. These can be profoundly discriminatory categorizations of race as community. These assumptions are made from *"the experience error"* of the outsider.

These rigid categorizations of belonging to community are short-sighted. Also, it is erroneous to assume the condition of the homogeneous community and the "good" community. In Chapter 3, the definitions of community were critically examined from various perspectives. Community is a disciplinary category of belonging to a group. The structuring of community is discriminatory and excluding of those considered to be the outsider, the other. The artist/architect in their role of *agents of change* tends to buy into the established political discourse that community is inherently good, which is an unanalysed presumption that leads to a cascade of epistemic errors and injustices.

One of the first epistemic errors is the romantic idealism of the pure community as

the good community. Richard Sennet presented this idealism as part of a *"learning process"* that is ingrained within all of us to feel *"belonging"* to *"a shared sense of what we think we ought to be like, as one social being, in order not to be hurt"* (Sennet, 1971, p. 41).

Artists/architects share this precondition of judging *what we ought to be like.* From what represents a habitable space, a tenement, a construction of architecture, a proper lifestyle, and a dignified life, the artist/architect from their own social and cultural perspectives establishes a value judgement. It is from this value judgement that their social interventions take shape as a mission, and purpose.

This idea of community, as defined by *perception error*, creates an illusory social parallelism. The artist/architect pairs his experience of his own social life, social class, citizenship and country to what he perceives should be the social norm of just lifestyle. The simplistic binary comparison between the artist/architect's lifestyle as "good" and the lifestyle of the people who inhabit the site as "bad" not only perpetuates their condition as marginalized but also legitimizes it.

Although the artist/architect might arrive with good and noble intentions to help, it is very often the case that the "community" was not asked beforehand if they needed help – and, if so, what kind of help is needed.

The plight of the marginalized is often romanticized by the artist/architect. The dystopian discourse of the disassociated, individualism, and lonely urban life is part of a popular political discourse that demonizes the urban-city and romanticizes a back-to-community ideology. This is the discourse of Benedict

Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 1983), those that never existed beyond the nationalism and culturalism of exclusionary policies.

The artist/architect must be careful not to fall into these romanticisms. The other problematic when working with the idea of community is the nostalgia of community.

The romantic nostalgia for the past is the desperate attempt to *"reenchant the world"* (Lowry and Duggan, 1998, p. 77). The problem lies in falling into a king of Roussonian nostalgia about utopianism of the noble savage and the better past, before the corruption of industrialized, technological present of the *alone-together* paradigm (Turkle, 2011).

The artist/architect cannot deny their epistemic authority as experts. Thus, this also positions them as *"teacher".* When the artist/architect utilizes the romanticized image of purity of the disfranchised, and places himself as protector from the evils of modern civilization, the artist/architect is assuming the role of the *good-colonizer.*

The *good-colonizer* is the teacher-protector agent. It is a patriarchal paternalist position whereby this agent places himself in the role of teacher, thus opening a new emancipatory world of rights, technology and knowledge. Also, the *good-colonizer* is the protector of the *"innocent"* vernacular culture that in their ignorance needs to be restrained because their innocence victimizes them.

Therefore, an a priori assumption that a marginalized, people and community need to be saved is a colonizing predisposition. The presumption from artist/architect that they know what is best for the community, because of their position of the

educated expert, delineates their practices as actions of epistemic injustice towards the same people that they claim to help.

The actions of the artist/architect might come from a true sense of goodness, but without a critical understanding of the social tectonics of the site, away from their own cognitive traps and experience errors, their practices are doomed to reproduce the same epistemic injustices to which these communities are constantly subjected.

The utopianism of a *pure community* that existed before colonialism, industrialization, and globalized consumer capitalism is used as a political discourse from the reactionary right and also from the revolutionary left. It is a discourse easily moulded to accommodate both kinds of arguments, from racist exclusionary policies to arguments of romantic pre-colonial utopias free of patriarchy (Lugones, 2010).

The poor-good community paradox places the artist/architect in the disjuncture between the nobility of poorness – a romantic condition that somehow cleans the poor from the modern evils of private property, individualism, convenience and consumption – and the community that wants to join in the comfort of modern life of private property, individualism, convenience and consumption.

When the artist/architect becomes the evangelizer of community living, the artist becomes just another doctrine of top-bottom planning. When the discourse that comes from the artist/architect is the *stay-in-community* and live-in-community, as a de facto better model for modern life that should be emulated, there is an implicit denial of the community's agency, when it is implied that the community is a homogenous whole, with a shared identity and voice. The many members of the

community that do not conform to the disciplinary image of the pure community, by ideology, sexuality and/or behaviour, are considered deviant and expelled from the territory. To assume that a community speaks for all its people is a naive response from a protected life of privilege, or a devious political schema.

These romantic constructions from the position of agency of the artist/architect commodify a discourse – *the life of the marginalized community* – which positions the artist/architect in a place of epistemic authority to market such discourse for the benefit of legitimizing art/architecture's social practices as a social good.

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Third epistemic error: perception**.**

The phenomenologist and geographer Yi-Fu Tuan wrote: *"So much emphasis can be put on the individual as a maker and perceiver that the external world loses its objective standing; reality 'out there' seems to be only a human construct"* (Tuan, 1982, p. 151).

Our perception of true reality is constructed by the collection of events that directly affect us. Descartes argued that the requisite for knowledge lies in the absolute confidence in one's belief (Fricker, 2006). For even our closest experiences, though – the ones that we would characterize as *"our reality"* – we still need an epistemic interpreter to legitimize our perception as reality. Who, then, counts as an *ideal epistemic agent*? The interpreter, who experiences the world in this particular way, and not another (Pohlhaus, 2017). The assumption of the author as *ideal epistemic agent* is the next epistemic error in the artist/architect's practice.

The artist/architect, by their condition as knowledge agents, experts and professionals, occupy a particular privileged social status of educated citizens. This status is more expansive if the artist/architect already belongs to a privileged social class with the correct *somatic universal norm*. This social positioning permits the artist/architect to freely explore within her social circle and transgress to other less privileged areas of society. Although this social status, by class, education, and professionalism carries within it the privilege of knowing, it also carries the *"privilege of not knowing or of not needing to know"* (Medina, 2013, p. 32). This is the effect of the *epistemology of ignorance* (Fricker, 2007; Medina, 2013). Miranda Fricker explains that this effect is born out of the colonizer's authority to exploit, oppressed and extract from the colonized; thus the colonizer was never in any position where he had to legitimize his authority to others. Hence, the *epistemology of ignorance* is *"a lack of investigation and study beyond one's own domain"* (Fricker, 2007).

The epistemology of ignorance is most commonly called *"white ignorance".* José Medina (2013) explains white ignorance as a *"hermeneutical inability of privileged white subjects to recognize and make sense of their racial identities, experiences, and positionality in a racialized world"* (Medina, 2012). The condition of "white" is not solely defined by skin colour; instead, it is part of a performative role within established power structures constructed by class positioning, economic power, family affiliations, and last a variable phenotype of "whiteness". The artist/architect is positioned in an epistemic legitimacy of "whiteness".

Medina further explains other consequences of white ignorance: "*the main epistemic vice that results from this privilege of not needing to know is a lack of*

curiosity" (Medina, 2013, p. 32).

This lack of curiosity is especially relevant when it comes to knowing about fields that have been presented as inconsequential, monstrous and abject. This e*pistemic laziness* means someone can feel that they don't have to familiarize themselves with these domains, and they are ignorant about their ignorance (Medina, 2013).

The artist/architect as a proper *agent of change* does not want to reproduce these conditions of epistemic laziness and epistemic ignorance in their own practices. The artist/architect cannot remain as a mere "neutral" interlocutor in the colonial situation. Otherwise, they are known as either someone who is compliant and belongs to the category of Edward Said's *beni-wewe* (Said, 1989, p. 210).

There is another epistemology at play in the site. It is the epistemology of extraction. The artist/architect extracts knowledge by using artistic euphemisms of appropriation and cultural influence. The artist/architect extracts valid context by pairing his own practice with the plight of his audience and users.

The first thing to note about these examples is precisely their significance as personal observations. This is not to make any trivial point about their "subjective" nature.

Paul de Man argued that "*the act of anthropological intersubjective interpretation, a fundamental discrepancy always prevents the observer from coinciding fully with the consciousness he is observing*" and that the "*same discrepancy exists in everyday language, in the impossibility of making the actual expression coincide with what has to be expressed, of making the actual sign coincide with what it signifies"*

(Schulte-Sasse, 1984, p. xxviii).

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Fourth epistemic error: the forum.

The German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas (1973) argued that we need the *"in public"* to legitimate. Habermas's view of the modern capitalist state's tendency to periodically develop "*legitimation deficit"* is a fundamental problem for capitalist consumer societies and a threat to their survival (Plant, 1982). Nevertheless, this periodic "*legitimation deficit"* also provides the creative tensions needed to tweak the social order and production systems of society and its institutions.

The *forum* is composed by the art institutions represented by museums, galleries, academies, and universities as well as the art market. The forum needs its own periodic "*legitimation deficit",* to reposition itself in the hierarchical order of society, and to renew its social capital according to social and market fluctuations. Thus, the forum's legitimization *"in public"* needs an audience of captive consumers to reposition their social function beyond their extensively criticized function of bourgeois banality.

Anthropologist Victor Turner (1974) suggested in his studies of ritual social drama that social action requires a performance, which is repeated. *"This repetition is at once a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation"* (Butler, 1988, p. 526). This ritualized social performance is what keeps the authority of the forum

over the artist and architect as the de facto legitimizing agency. Hence the forum exploits the banalities of artists' fashionable engagements with the social to create a new market that guarantees their own continuance as legitimizing authority.

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6.4. The public as a hypothesis.

What is the public in contemporary society? According to the sociologist Richard Sennett (1978), the first recorded uses of the word *"public"* in English language related the idea of *"public"* with the common good in society (Sennett, 1978, p. 16).

To question the field of the *public* implies the posing of a discussion to show the tensions that make the question uncomfortable. The apperception of the *public* is a contested field. The colloquialism of the term "*public*" has been related to democratic connotations. It paints an image of "*openness*", "*accessibility*", "*participation*", "*inclusion*" and "*accountability*" to "*the people"* (Agnew, 1987).

Socially engaged art and social architecture unfolds and performs in the forum (Weizman, 2013) of the public realm; a critique of what actually is understood by the term *public* is therefore paramount for this discussion. Moreover, there are overlapping issues also to be critiqued when matters of public, publicness and publicity arise in the study of art and architecture. The representations that these terms are imbued with are varied and at times paradoxical. With each itinerant alteration subdued by social, political and cultural context, the significance of the public varies, be it by a relational or ontological condition in its agency or structure. The hermeneutics of *the public* are complex to say the least. Who are the public?

What is to the public? What is to be in public? The *public sphere* and *public space* are some of such issues that are inexorably tied to the first definition of public. Therefore, the following account will concentrate into defining how these terms are used in this research and arguments.

The term *public* as a political concept it is not an unequivocal definition, and in its distinct applications in political contests, this term constructs and identifies distinct problematics, evaluations and distinctly different courses of action (Rabotnikof, 2008).

The political philosopher Nora Rabotnikof in her book *En Busca de un Lugar Común (2005)* posits some of the putative uses that the concept of *public* in the context of public space has embodied. First: *public* is what it is *"common"* to all. This also encompasses what it is represented by *"general*'' interests over *"particular"* interest. Also, Rabotnikof includes the tension between the "general" and the "particular", sometimes represented by the state and civil society. Second: *public* is what it is *"visible"* and *"manifested"*, contra posed by what it is *"occult"* and *"obscure"*. And third: public is what is *"open"* or *"accessible"*. Moreover, these conditions apply only to those whose citizenship or status allows them to be part of the public; they are remitted for those who fall outside the proper categories for belonging to the public. The categorizations of admittance are commonly defined by the constitution of a proper citizenship by class, gender, race, sexuality and behaviour.

Hannah Arendt (1958) writes on the meaning of *public* as signifying that everything that appears to be *in public* can be seen and heard by everybody and has the amplest publicity possible. Arendt writes that the presence of others who see and

hear the same as we do, assures us of the reality of the world. Arendt views the public space as a *"stage"* for the *"performances of the individual"*, where such *"performances"* are constitutive of the formation of the individual in society and a *"protection"* against the impermanence of human existence. Individual human existence is constructed by the publicness of the individual. The appearance in public of the individual reassures reality beyond the individual's own imaginary to check to an *"outside reality*" that affirms the reality of the individual's identity (Arendt, 1998).

Andrea Thuma (2011) interprets Arendt's position as follows: *"Humans appear before others in order to be recognized. Through acting in public, which means becoming visible to the others around her, the subject's identity is exposed and revealed. This "revelation" of identity cannot happen in isolation, it cannot result from self-reflection alone. Only the eyes of the others can truly disclose one's identity from all possible sides"* (Thuma, 2011). Following Arendt's position on the subject, Thuma argues that this *"disclosure"*" of publicity *"makes"* the subject. And in doing so, *"Becoming visible to others through action not simply means revealing, but also performing an identity. It is the performance of a public identity, a 'public self' which is constructed in this space"* (Thuma, 2011).

Jerome Kohn argues that *"Human reality is appearance"* (Kohn, 2000). This leads to the exclusiveness of the public, as membership of the public is permitted by the act of performing publicness as recognized by our social piers. Hence the invisibility of the others who do not belong to the public of social peers, and are thus not recognized as being public or as being in publicness. The rhetoric about "the

public" justifies exclusions and expulsions as natural.

The art critic Rosalyn Deutsche (1998) argues that exclusions have to be enacted to maintain and homogenize the public, and thus public space by *"expelling specific differences are dismissed as necessary to restore social harmony"* (Deutsche, 1998, p. 58). In theory, public still means people; in practice, public means government, (Quilligan, 2012). Hence Walter Lippmann's 1927 admonition that the public was just a phantom (Lippmann, 1993). According to Lippmann, *"citizens cannot be reasonably expected to form themselves into a responsible, well-informed public"*. Hence, *"the public in this ideal sense is a hypothesis contrary to any possible fact"* (Lippmann, 1993).

Therefore, there is no public, just an audience. Since to be a public is deemed to have some agency over a common field. If there is not a common field, it has been replaced by a variety of self-interested private overlapping smaller fields. Agency of a public is nullified according to James B. Quilligan, who posited: *"Public no longer signifies a community's authority to manage its local resources and express its own social or ecological demands; 'public' now means the central governing authority to whom we have surrendered the control of these resources, which then meets our demand through conventional private markets"* (Quilligan, 2012). And the audience remains as mere conglomerate of consumers (Debord, 1994; Rosler, 1987) of the neoliberal political spectacle of leftovers between government and private interest to make all common goods into private goods.

Thus, the public is reduced to *the social welfare client*. Participation of the public in society is reduced to voting (Fraser, 1989). Habermas called this the reduction of a

"culture-debating" public to a *"culture-consuming"* public (Habermas, 1989, p. 160).

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6.4.1. The fiction of public space.

Who is permitted entry into the *public space*, or the *public sphere*; or excluded from these? These are issues articulated through power relations.

Don Mitchell argues that for city planners and government officials, public space is constituted as a "*controlled and orderly retreat, where a properly behaved public might experience the spectacle of the city"* (Mitchell, 1995, p. 115).

As a point of departure, it can be argued by a somehow controversial statement that there is no such a thing as *public space*. That all space is divided between private space and government-owned/administered space. Government is defined as the conglomerate of bureaucratic institutions that administer the day-to-day structure of hegemonic of power and monopoly of violence of the state. Therefore, the idea of a *"public"* space that is a site administered, regulated and disciplined by the government's bureaucracy is different from the ordinary use of *the space of the state* in sociological and political terms. Although not immensity different, the space of the state is about social and political mapping, control, and the fabrication of geographical and ideological boundaries (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Soja, 1989; Sassen, 2006).

The characterization of the ongoing privatization and the commodification of public goods is concomitant with the ideological transformation of governments as entrepreneurs, and with the emergence of the so-called public/private alliances that

have emerged as economic solutions for indebted nations. The enterprising nature of debt manufacture and administration by a whole range of private corporate multinational interests has diminished enormously the traditional role, agency and the fiscal capacity of the state. In contraposition, the role of the private – and, to a limited extent, that of NGOs and third-sector organizations – has increased (Banerjee, 2001).

Since there is no "public" and every piece of earth has been mapped and territorialized as private good or as government-managed good, en route to be privatized away from the common good, the problematic about understanding public spaces diverts from the colloquial use of the word and ideas surrounding the public, publicness, and access.

Public and publicness represent two very distinct concepts. Both delineate representations of belonging and having access to a space in common: a public space, public building, public park, etc. In our minds, following common language we assume that it means *belonging to the public*; in short, belonging to us.

Publicness does not appear in common usage as much but still it resonates to us as something to do with the public – again, *us* – and therefore with the same relationship of openness and accessibility. We cannot be more wrong about these statements.

As artist Vito Acconci observed, *"the words public space are deceptive"* (Acconci, 1990). Acconci talks about public being more of a condition rather than an actual architectural space. He points out that almost unconsciously we assume that the meaning of public and its relation to public space is an openness to people, and

access to gather on and within a demarcated space designated as public. That just the fact of calling a space *public* functions as a separation, a segregation of spatial access within a city. Between the public space and the rest of the space, such space is the private space. He theorizes further about two kinds of public space. The first is the one that is already designated by the state as public; and the second is the one that is made public by occupation. The former was government-owned space that has been legislated to have a public access. But openness of access does not qualify a space as public, or any other endeavour that it is called to be public. If we follow Acconci's theorization on public space, then the condition of public is an agreed condition by which the people who gather in such space and venues behave as a public. Such is a space made public by occupation, the collective act of being and performing a public. What he continues to allude to is that public space is an agreed and very small portion of the state's controlled space. Publicness is then a legislated condition with an attached temporality imposed in such definition.

Rosalyn Deutshe (1998) also comments on the case for public space by defining it not so much as a spatial category of location but instead as one defined by the performance of an operation by the people in such space. Thus, any site has the potential to be transformed into a public space. Nevertheless, the performative action over the site is dependent on the publicness of the actors.

Publicness is a social condition dependent on the construction of the public persona. Publicness has been romanticized as a quality that we once had but have lost, and must somehow retrieve (Habbermas, 1989). Richard Sennet argued that this loss was a result of the epoch of consumerism, mass media, and the expansion

of the state into the intimate space of the family (Sennett, 1974). Nowadays, our publicness is reduced to a virtual presence on the imaginary manufactured pseudo-realities of social media, where there is no need of a *"public"* per se. If anything remains of a public it is what American critical theorist Nancy Fraser posited in 1989: that public participation has been reduced to the mere act of voting. But this time it is reduced to a digital ageographic *"click"* as participation and enunciation of subjectivity. As the architect and urbanist Michael Sorkin (1992) argued about the public places manufactured to live our lives, *"this 'place' is fully ageographic"* (Sorkin, 1992, p. xiii).

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6.5. On participation.

"From Cairo to Instagram to Occupy Wall Street. Participation really is the new opium of the people. If everyone took part in everything, everything would turn out perfectly fine – or so preaches the holy doctrine of participation. And sometimes the exact opposite holds true" (Miessen and Grassegger, 2011, p. 21).

The artist and architect want to be *"agents of change"*. As such they all seek to change the life of their users and audiences for the better; and in doing so, to transform their own lives for the better too.

There is a generalized interest in the idea of participation as an instrument to generate emancipatory practices to solve social inequalities and old injustices deemed to have been enacted to disfranchised groups. The English architect Cedric Price made his critique clear: *"it's almost as if everything is justified because the*

audience can participate" (Price, 2010).

From government-sponsored social-welfare initiatives to community projects, to arts funders, art institutions, and academia, participation has been contextualized within the frameworks of democratic access and citizenship. Especially in the case of communities and groups of people that are seen by the government, academic institutions, and third-sector organizations as having traditionally been left outside the social project of democracy.

Participation and participatory engagement are equated with social engagement in the political field. Thus, participation has become necessary elements in most political discourse from the left as well as the right. Participation has also become a necessary element in most mission statements from all kinds of cultural institutions. From government-sponsored cultural institutions, to private museums, galleries, universities and art programs, participation, as a social emancipatory practice, has been located at the centre of their social purpose and benefit to society. But, more often than not, participation is used as a token to placate and pacify the public and to protect the status quo.

Participation is often understood as an alternative form of access, a means of empowering the user (Miessen, 2010). Claire Bishop (2006) argued that participation as a practice has the potential to transform the viewers out of the role of mere observers and into the role of active producers, as a means to produce new social relationships (Bishop, 2006). Her naïve perspective is conducive to attest to her theoretical positions celebrating participatory arts in the context of art institutions. On the other hand, the architect and writer Jeremy Till (2006) argues, *"The word*

participation has recently become as overused as that other catchphrase of contemporary politics, sustainability" (Till, 2006, p. 1). He adds that *"The trouble is that in their overuse 'participation', 'community' and 'sustainable' have become more or less meaningless"* (Till, 2006, p. 1). The overuse of participation in political popular discourse is constantly paired up with the idea of community. In both images that are discursively painted on participation and on community, the same cognitive gaps abound between the colloquialism of the image on our social consciousness and the actual form of what a community is, and what participation is actually used for.

Participation is being used as an apparent quick-fix to the accusations of elitism and discrimination to cultural institutions, to government, to the private board rooms of corporations. *"Participation works as a form of differential inclusion"* (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2011, p. 67) as it is instrumentalized to serve as a social facade of inclusion while maintaining the social hierarchy, epistemic authority and political control of the ruling class, government and private interest.

The publicity that participation has received as a necessary part of every public and private act has created a new fertile ground to be exploited by all types of government agencies, cultural institutions, artists, architects, and markets.

It can be said that there is now a *market of participation*. From product design, to participatory democracy ideals, some authors are suggesting that there is a *"seismic shift in cultural production"* being driven by this new ethos to participate; a move from *"sit-back-and-be-told culture"* to a *"making-and-doing culture"* (Gauntlett, 2011).

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6.5.1. Participation as token and placebo.

The usual idea of participation as an individual engagement in the creation of a polity, where everybody that is included will participate in the creation of a consensus in the sense of Rousseau's democracy, is far from what it actually means in practice. Both participation and democracy have become tokens and placebos of contemporary society, as neither includes the direct action of the individual. Architect Meike Schalk presents participation in the traditional context of the institutionally governed planning process as prescribed tokenism. (Schalk, et al, 2018). From Sherry Arnstein's ladder of social participation (1969), Joseph Beuys's social-sculpture dictum *"everybody is an artist"* and his ideas of "A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART" (Tisdall,1973), the experience economy's customer-participation strategies (Pine II and Gilmore, 1998), the audience involvement spectrum (Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride, 2011), to human-centred design techniques of effectiveness and efficiency, and community-architecture models (Wates and Knevitt, 1987) of the 1980s trying to reinterpret the power relationships between the architect and the community. Even Gillian Rose's "Broken Middle" theory of a place where users and architects alike "*confront themselves and each other as particular and as universal*" (Rose,1994). In all of these, participation strategies, methodologies, and plans abound. They all serve the purposes that they were designed to achieve. Meike Schalk (2018) posits participation as a "prescribed tokenistic manner in institutionally governed planning process." (Schalk, et al, 2018; 299). But none are really participatory to the full extent of what the word could mean. Each form has had at one time its followers

and detractors. As Rose once stated, *"general law that one day's utopia becomes the following day's dystopia"* (Rose, 1992).

Neoliberal and globalization policies, attitudes, and fears have shaken the traditional forms of state government and citizen participation; the concept of participation has been exploited and brought forward as a legitimizing tool for the state and other types of third-sector[37] organizations to count on the *interpassivity*[38] of people. These types of projects use the key words of *participation*, *decentralization* and *associationalism* (Kallman and Clark, 2016) to gain the trust and to appear to be *inclusive* and *democratic*. By the same token, the words *inclusive* and *democratic* are part of the common lexicon of the third sector, the state and private interest, when the goal is to legitimize a project by publicness, and to generate trust and legitimacy by *public participation*.

It is said that the subject gets to know her world and her place through praxis. If the praxis is of the individualistic consumer culture, which nowadays represents the normative of the individual, what is then left of the democratic political public sphere (Mouffe, 2002). Further disintegration by moralizing and juridification of all political discourse has rendered the interest on participation of the "public" into a fatalistic apathy.

Carole Pateman argues that "*participation, as far as the majority is concerned, is participation in the choice of the decision makers. Thus the function of participation is solely a protective one"* (Pateman, 1970); and the political participation of the

public is reduced to voting. The idea, nowadays, that a representation of participation and democracy can be achieved through architecture or social arts practices is often thuddingly naïve (Till, 2006).

Participation brings a space of discomfort to the artist and to the architect, both of whom have been trained in disciplines that promote the individuality of the creative self and the construction of a singular ego following the mythology of originality and the masterpiece. Participation positions the artist and architect in an unfamiliar social field – the community.

The first misnomer that confronts the ideas of participation starts with the belief that community refers to a homogeneous group of people. People who share common social, cultural and political values are seen as a group that can easily achieve consensus on topics that affect them all as a community. The reality is that the *purified model of a community* (Macintyre, 2007) remains a neo-Aristotelian utopian fantasy that works only as romantic propaganda for reactionary political campaigns. The reality is that the diversity or "impurity" of the peoples that compose the "community" thwarts any easy attempt to reach consensus. Thus, from the start, it appears that any kind of participatory strategy is to remain only as a theoretical framework, unless there is a restructuring of the power relations between the artist and architect and the community.

Participation should constitute the first step towards a society where all people can become the historical subject but does not necessarily guarantee that each individual will directly participate in the administrations of such entity. This kind of *direct self-management* can happen only within an organization that guarantees an

equal power-footing for all of its members. *Direct-participation* on any social enterprise or community can properly happen only in an arena constituted by individuals with equal social, cultural, economic and political capital. Not exactly constituted as a society of equals; but between individuals of equivalent power, who share equivalent influence between them. It is then that *direct-participation* can take place without the direct coercion of power. Only then can a structure of *agonistic participation* (Mouffe, 2000) be properly put to work. In other words, a space for open *conflictual participation* can happen only if it is possible to neutralize the social and cultural hierarchical structures that nullify *direct-participation* as a social practice. Mouffe argues that consensus can be reached beyond the imaginary ideals of complete agreement. Mouffe calls it *"conflictual consensus"* (Mouffe, 2000). She presents that already in pluralistic democracy there is a demand of the citizen that requires of her an "*alliance to the values"* of the *"ethico-political principles"* of the society. Nevertheless, even if the consensus she posits already exists through many different and conflicting interpretations, the issue of citizenships falls in between the realization of this theory. Citizenship does not mean the same to all social actors, as there are people who do not have the same rights and powers of a citizenship that guarantees them opportunity to be a social actor, and instead they remain mere objects of democracy and never a subject. Therefore, this concept could work only in a socially just and equal society.

Following on from Mouffe's concept of *"conflictual consensus"*, Markus Miessen (2010) argued that *"Any form of participation is already a form of conflict"* (Miessen, 2010, p. 122). This is because there is a social and political environment already in existence, in whatever site one would choose to work in; and all political and social

environments have within them many conflictual forces that wrestle for their own good. Hence, any form of participation in this site would most probably be in conflict with some already existing party or ideology. On the other hand, Schalk proposes a “critical participation” to challenge the scripted planning process with the inclusion of “engaged citizens” with the hope of “repoliticizing the discourse on possible urban futures.” (Schalk, et al, 2018; 299).

Lars Lerup argued (1977) that participation in these conditions becomes a *“managerial solution”*. He posited that there is a *“symmetry of ignorance”* between the *“professional”* – the artist/architect – and the *“user”* – the public, the community. By this he meant that neither one (the *“professional”* nor the *“user”*) knows each other’s needs (Lerup, 1977). It is an a priori assumption by the professionals that they know what the user needs. (This is what I have called the *colonizer’s perspective*.). On the other hand, there are the needs of the professionals, which they are also expecting to fulfil. The user’s needs are agglomerated by the simplified statement of *the need for a better life*. The same could be said of the professional’s need for a better professional life. This would include the building of a professional portfolio of social and community works, which would hopefully open the doors to a successful professional career.

If artists and architects really want to be true *“agents of change”* for a community, they have to start by accepting that they carry with them a colonizing perspective. Their view of the social landscape is a narrow perspective from their own lenses of epistemic privilege and authority. Thus, the first step is to accept and discard some of the epistemic authority of their professional title and social status. This act of epistemic solidarity starts by letting go of some of the control of the project while

still maintaining their ability to envision, but without the colonizing imposition. This is very hard to do, as the epistemic divide is not only personalized by the agents of change but is also kept by their *"social training"* (Pateman, 1970). Hence the position of the artist and architect requires twofold demystification: first of his own myth and second of the social training pedagogy that the community has received throughout their lives. Sometimes it is easier for the artist and architect to let go of this hierarchy of social values, than it for the community.

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6.5.2. The market of art participation.

Art participation has been redefined in the following way: *"as people increasingly choose to engage with art in new, more active and expressive ways"*. In this redefinition there is an overt mention of a new market. *"This movement carries profound implications, and fresh opportunities, for the nonprofit sector"* (Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride, 2011). Also, this so-called *"new movement"* of participatory arts opened a new range of new funding sources for arts institutions, museums, private and co-operative galleries to redefine their roles as socially relevant in their *"communities"*.

Jeremy Till argues: *"In architecture, participation is now a necessary part of most public planning processes, but much of it remains token"* (Till, 2006, p. 1).

This new market of participation helped enormously to reshape the social mission of the art museum from the highly criticized elitist definitions of *"museums as the mausoleums of art"* (Adorno, 1967) and their role into what Theodor Adorno called

the bourgeois *"neutralization of culture"* (Adorno, 1967, p. 175). Museums have been seen as elitist cultural protectionist institutions. The artist Andrea Fraser (1986) pictures the museum as *"a temple to the fetish commodity"* in her performances at the exhibition Damaged Goods at the New Museum in New York City, during the summer of 1986. She called attention to the *"subtle inversions"* of the museum's elitist cultural protectionism: *"while the museum claims to protect works of art in the name of the public, it actually protects them from the public"* (Owens, 1987).

Museums specially had benefited of this new market for participatory arts. This *"cultural shift"* had allowed the traditional museum to tweak its social-cultural presence from the formative institution into a new performative institution. Museums are presenting themselves as instruments for place-making and community-building. The appearance of art-education programs and outreach *community* art programs has helped the museums with a social facelift to revalidate their governmental subsidies of public funds, and to continue to maintain their status as legitimate cultural institutions.

This revitalization of the museum's authority to aggregate a "new" meaning to art has continued to cultivate a symbiotic relationship with the new art forms of participatory arts: dialogical art, relational aesthetic art, new genres such as public art, socially engaged art, etc.

This alliance with the participatory arts has had the expected result of the institutionalization of these art forms. Walter Benjamin in 1935 argued that *"the greater the decrease in the social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by then public. The conventional is*

uncritically enjoyed, and the truly new is criticized with aversion" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 234). The intervention of the museum in legitimizing these participatory art practices has had the detrimental results of fashioning their initial vanguardist intent into the convention of enjoyment, and spectacle.

The language that the institutionalized forms of participatory arts now use in their project description and intent is more reminiscent of a market-analysis report than of a vanguardist art practice. The institutional narrative of the origins, or the need for participatory arts, starts with the economic crisis of 2008, and *"the pervasiveness of social media, the proliferation of digital content and rising expectations for self-guided, on-demand, customized experiences have all contributed to a cultural environment primed for active arts practice"* (Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride, 2011, p. 5). This market analysis of an art form is troublesome. First, by trying to confirm if it is economically productive, and second, by checking if it is culturally accepted. This type of value analysis of art also appropriates into its social discourse the cultural diversity and cultural ecology by-line of a new type of bourgeois populist politics. In this discourse emerges a new artist, who accepts, integrates and celebrates all forms of cultural practices into her own practice. The official institutional discourse of the new artist and the participatory arts assumes that participation implicitly conveys socially conscious integration and desegregation. In the competitive marketplace of art institutions, it is seen that the institutions that still maintain the *"consumption model of program delivery"* – the traditional museum model – are to lose influence against the institutions that have embraced hybrid modalities that include the traditional role of museum spectatorship as well as the *"community-based creative expression"* of participatory

arts practice (Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride, 2011).

The growing body of art practice around participatory engagement also reaches into architecture practice. It has been analysed that the more participatory these practices become, the more attendance they generate. Thus, what Benjamin presented as "*the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by then public"* holds to be very true, as these participatory practices tend to become more conciliatory and simplistic in their inclusiveness discourses that serve to the common denominator, and less vanguardist and critical with complex social discourses that are beyond the intellectual understanding of the common people. The marketability of the participatory arts and architectural practices has been a success with museum and planning boards, but has converted the initial revolutionary qualities of the first participatory art and architecture movements into palliative forms of social entertainment.

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6.5.3. For a transformative participation.

The issue of aesthetic taste comes at the centre of this debate. Whose aesthetics and taste are important? What is the role of the experts, as embodied by the artist and architect? Should they be the guides of the common people? The problem arises that, most of the time, the important issues of social occupation of space and politics of place are often imperceptibly bypassed, mainly because they are not thought to be important factors in the traditional design pedagogy of art and architectural practice. When these pedagogies mostly see the political as background of social landscape, and not as conceptual framework, then it is not

surprising that the judging of designs is seduced more by shape and colour, and focussed less on the potentials of social dynamics.

Can there really be devise a “true” model of participation in art and architecture practice? The question that Markus Miessen posited in 2010 is very relevant and difficult to provide a single universal answer to. *“How can one move away from romanticized notions of participation into more proactive, conflictual models of engagement?”* (Miessen, 2010, p. 122).

All forms of true participation, if there is such a thing, depend on the particular social and historical conditions of the site. The only way that the artist and architect in their role as agents of change could move away from romanticized notions of participation is by having not only a deeper intersectional understanding of the site’s social tectonics, and the economic political conflicts entangled in the history of the site, but also a critical purview of their own personal historical and socio-economic political conflicts. Without a critical intersectional perspective of all the social elements and dynamics necessary to constitute a proper participatory practice, where all voices and experiences are considered, together with a critical recognition of the power asymmetries between the artist/architect and its audience/users, the artist/architect will keep repeating the cognitive mistake of thinking about their own practices as a device that can be parachuted to any place as a solution to complex social problems.

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6.6. On place-making device.

Artists and architects design and build things. These things can take the shape of tangible objects and structures; furthermore these things can be intangible designs, situations, organizations, events and performances. Artists and architects derive their practices from this canon of building and designing. To speak of place-making as an activity related to a practice is to speak of the spatial and social intervention of artists or architects in space by means of a device. This device can take the form of architecture, an artwork, a situation, or an activity designed at the centre of a practice. The device functions as a social catalyst that is meant to transform space as in the sense of "open space" of Cartesian terra nullius into a place as in the sense of a location interwoven into the social-communal consciousness and narrative of a community. Such devices are designed to achieve this objective by triggering a scripted practice of place-making. The idea of a place-making practice is a parachuting strategy of landing a device on "open" space, thus unfolding a series of events by which the "open" space of terra nullius is transformed into what the designers claim to be a proper place. Who are the designers? And for whom is this place-making designed? These are contrapuntal questions that have to be answered from an intersectional perspective, where place is a relative and relational concept and not a fit-all definition.

Place-making as a practice in architecture is always connected to landing a device, much like the July 20, 1969 Apollo lunar module landing on the moon (Fig.2). This metaphor is relevant because it describes the same colonizer's logic of place-making. The stipulation that landing – or, in the case of the artist and architect, by parachuting a practice as an intervention in a community – triggers place-making is

a short-sighted enterprise. After the artist and architect leaves the site, the assumption is that the device will continue to have the transformative effect on the community. On some occasions this place-making practice has had the desired effect of creating a long-lasting communal place. Such was the case with the artwork/architecture of *La Perla Bowl* (2006) (Fig.3), which was designed by artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo as an art intervention into a derelict abandoned space in the marginalized community of La Perla. This work has proven effective in the long run; others have been more akin to the Apollo lunar landing – left forgotten after the initial attention and publicity, and now existing only in the archives of museum exhibition catalogues and professional portfolio publicity material.

Fig.32. Lunar module. The Moon. 1969.

Fig.33. *La Perla Bowl*. La Perla, San Juan. Puerto Rico.2016.

The conquest of space starts by claiming discovery over terra nullius and then performing occupation by colonization. Gaston Bachelard had argued that we do not live in a homogenous, empty space (Bachelard, 1964). Instead, Foucault

posited, we live inside a heterogeneous space full of relations that delineate a multiplicity of sites (Foucault, 1984). Foucault, in *"Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias"* (1967), claims *"our own era […] seems to be that of space".* We are, he suggests, *"in the age of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, the near and the far, the side by side, and the scattered"*.

A place-making device is characterized as an object or event, a tangible thing or an intangible occurrence, or a spectacle that stands to facilitate or trigger a social response of a sense of place. Ideas of what is place and placeness are structured around a political discourse of community-making. The de facto uncritical assumption by government, artists, architects and cultural institutions that "community" is a good thing is derived from the simplistic dualism that limits place experience (Massey, 1997) to localized, stabilized concepts of identity, culture and community (Dovey, 2010, p. 3). This leaves outside the possibilities of understanding place as a dynamic, globally connected process of a *"global sense of place"* (Cresswell, 2006; Massey, 1997; Peet, 1998).

Place-making device is the idea of a parachuting colonizer practice that lands, as a metaphorical lunar module, upon a space and by its mere presence creates a series of interrelationships between the inhabitants of the space –the site, and the agent of the artist/architect. The device-event acts as a kind of Heidegger's bridge. It is cause for a new relationship with the site's social tectonics, natural environment, and surrounding architecture and with the inhabitants that traverse such space. Beyond Heidegger's dictum, to dwell is to be on place (Heidegger, 1971).

The assumption goes that place and the sense of place can be reproduced by a set

of local interventions imbued in the occupation of a territory. The idea of a soft occupation of an existing territory previously deemed unusable, abandoned or socially inadequate can be achieved by inserting a physical occupying architectonic structure or art structure, or an intangible social event that, together or apart, will create the conditions for people to gather around the architecture/event, and create relationships of community bonding. The image of the lunar module is quite fitting to illustrate this representation of place-making as an alien occupation of space with the intentions of creating a place. This occupation and transformation of place is a gentrification strategy, under the guise of art and architecture social practices, public-art, art-washing, urban renewal, and community-building. The soft-occupation strategy to create new attractive places for a manufactured sense of place is sold as a modern convenience lifestyle by urban developers and land speculators.

The manufacture of place, as a social and economic strategy of social cleansing, pacification and beautification, entails the massive expulsions of those deemed not to be the approbated dwellers of these new places. David Seamon (1979) called the environmental experience of everyday life *"the sum total of peoples' firsthand involvements with the geographical world in which they live"* (Seamon, 1979, p. 15). When this experience is of the manufactured place, these places are exclusive constructions of *"place insideness"* (Cresswell, 2004; Horan, 2000; Massey 1997; Relph, 1976) that generates parochialism, xenophobia, racism, and all kinds of narrow-minded protectionism ideologies. The market ideology of place manufactured by occupation and gentrification is based upon the social tenet that, regardless of the historical time or the geographical, technological, and social

situation, *people will always need place.* The certitude of this canon that drives the production of non-places (Augé, 1992) disguised as "place" by decorative art and architecture interventions of place-identity are driven by market forces that continue to rely on the publicized idea that people's need to identify with place is a necessary integral foundation of being a human being (Casey, 1993; Malpas, 1999). This has been turned into the "necessary" human desire for private property as the legitimizing quality for citizenship and rights.

Lucy Lippard (1997) posited that every landscape is a hermetic narrative, and thus *"finding a fitting place for oneself in the world is finding a place for oneself in a story"* (Lippard, 1997, p. 33). Place can be many things simultaneously. For some it is belonging, intimacy, familiarity, security, affection, and love. For others the same place means exclusion, anonymity, violence, abjection, and hate.

The trick then is to see how people weave stories in and out of place to construct a sense of identity. Lippard argued that it is local knowledge that distinguishes every place from every other place. *"Inherently in the local is the concept of place a portion of land/town/cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar"* (Lippard, 1997, p. 8).

Don Mitchell posited that *"'place' travels with people"* (Mitchell, 2001, p. 278). When people's movements are determined by expulsions from their own places by the alienating logic of extractivist capitalism, place-making is forcefully transformed from the ontological ground to mere location (Malpas, 2008). Place-making has become a formulaic design program for real-estate developers and market speculation. From strategies of participatory design, to community design

paradigms for creating a *"sense of place"*, art and architecture's design pedagogies have been complicit in designing parachuting colonizing practices of place-making. The assumption is that a homogeneous participatory design formula can parachute as the lunar module on *"alien land"*, and by its mere presence colonize the sense of place of this *"alien land"* into the appropriate models of the occupier/designer. This assumption is the a priori imperative of urban-renewal strategies.

If art and architecture's practice uncritically follow capitalist consumer ideology of commodifying nostalgic ideologies of place-making into market-based imperative, it will thus reduce art and architecture's social purpose to an instrument for gentrification and expulsion. Nevertheless, as Foucault stated: *"where there is power, there is resistance"* (Foucault, 1978). Insurgent practices of citizenship (Holsten, 1998), agency and occupation from the experience of marginalized communities are permeating into the social practice discourse of art and architecture.

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6.6.1. Heidegger's place-making device, the bridge.

The architecture work of *El Potocine*, (Fig. 4) designed by the Atelier Arquitectura Expandida in Ciudad Bolivár, Bogotá, Colombia is a work of social architecture that has been successful in design function as a place-making device. Commissioned by the Ojo al Sancocho community organization, and built in 2016, together with Arquitectura Expandida and members of the surrounding community, *El Potocine* keeps on functioning as a community cinema and gathering place. This project, together with *La Perla Bowl*, shares the elements of communal construction and

communal absorption after the artist and architect have gone away. Both projects have created a sense of place around them that has integrated both projects into the everyday narrative of their communities. Heidegger's (1971) metaphor of the bridge is a keen description of how these projects have intertwined with the life of the community.

Heidegger presented a bridge (Heidegger, 1971). He argued that the bridge acted as a *thing* that allows people to gather – unavoidably and forcefully – sometimes by placing them in need of it.

The bridge as a built object and built thing carries the significance of its physical presence as an influence over the parameters of people's experience of everyday life. By allowing people to cross the water at that spot, the bridge changes the patterns of people's everyday lives, and establishes new ones related to its physical and social presence.

The bridge becomes the place-making device that creates the *"spirit of place"* or *"genius loci"* (Norberg Schulz, 1980) related to the Heideggerian view of place and dwelling as the primordial ground of *being-in-the-world*. Although Kim Dovey argues that *"genius loci"* reduces to essence and ignores the social constructions of place identity (Dovey, 2010;4).

Heidegger also suggested that the bridge might affect how an individual understood their situation. The bridge didn't just alter possibilities for life experience; it mediated between people and the world around them. He felt that the bridge, as a *Heideggerian thing*, allowed people to negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with the world. People near the bridge, who cross it regularly or live near it, come to

feel that they somehow understand it. It becomes familiar; through its familiarity, people created a sense of *"insideness"* and belonging. The bridge offers people opportunities to relate themselves to the world around them. For Heidegger, the bridge *"holds up"* the individual.

The bridge as a place-making device is intellectually significant because its presence allows people to understand the world around them in a particular way. It also generates a cognitive framework of the types of relations, behaviours and identities that are proper and authentic to this place.

The place-making device can be thought of as a colonizing device as its presence structures a proper way of being-in-place. The device/thing creates a representation framework of the nature of the relationships of the place. Hence, everything around it is colonized in terms of relational meaning to the author's perspective of the device/thing. Everyday life experience now acquires a new sign and meaning to everyone else who *"crosses the river"* at a different place.

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Chapter 7. Towards a critical epistemic practice for art and architecture.

This chapter presents a theoretical framework for the development of a critical epistemic practice for art and architecture. Such process necessarily starts by looking inwards into the practice to the critical contestation between ethics and aesthetic values, before assembling methods, experiences, and designs from social and public art and social architecture to assemble a functional set of epistemic operations, tactics and a critical decolonial perspective. The epistemic injustices and colonial thinking that permeate art and architecture practices must be recognized. Then comes the critique of how this knowledge is created, legitimized and disseminated to the communities where artists and architects are intervening with their socio-spatial practices. Only then can there be understanding of the consequences of epistemic injustices and silencing that these communities have been subjected by the socially engaged spatial practices of artists' and architects' initiatives and interventions. This chapter concludes by arguing how a proactive participation guided by radical solidarity and beginning with acknowledgement of other voices and experiences is fundamentally necessary to develop a *socially sensible* practice that confronts the epistemic errors in artists' and architects' socio-spatial practices.

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7.0. Epistemologies of interpretation.

> *"Knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control"* (Said, 1979, p. 36).

When Edward Said posited these thoughts about the perspective of the colonized interpreting the world of the colonizer, he was describing the power asymmetries that dominate the modern social relationships of culture, sexuality, economy, and politics. The dynamic relationships of how complex social structures are constructed between epistemologies of dominance and the dominated. Said questioned the legitimacy of an epistemic practice when he asked the simple but nevertheless profound question of any knowledge: *"Who writes? And for whom is the writing being done? And in what circumstances?"* (Said, 1983, p. 135). In this questioning of epistemic legitimacy, Said raises the awareness of *"a politics of interpretation"* imbued in every human communicative exchange (Said, 1983, p. 135). The social organization of knowledge in modern Western capitalist society is thus interpreted from within such *politics of interpretation*. Interpretation has been delegated to the forms of epistemic authority to the agency of the narrator (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1993; Fanon, 1963; Spivak, 1988; Mignolo, 2000; Puwar, 2004), and the author (Barthes, 1977; Benjamin, 1968; Foucault, 1969; Segato, 2018a; Lugones, 2007; Lorde, 1984). This creates a social dependency of interpretation between the "public", the "common" people, and knowledge; and therefore, also creates a dependency on what Said called *"the cult of expertise and professionalism"* (Said, 1983, p. 136). This dependency creates the epistemic gap between creators/producers of knowledge and the consumer/audience of all the products of such knowledge.

The artist/architect in their role as expert and professional is agent of epistemic authority. As producer of knowledge, she is the de facto interpreter, and the intermediary between the common people and higher knowledge –theological, mystical, philosophical, and scientific (Shiva, 1993; Wallerstein, 1997; Amin, 2009).

From the social positioning of the artist/architect as agent of epistemic authority, it is necessary to have a critical perspective of their inherited prejudicial "view from the centre" (Foster, 1996), and of the effects their social practices have on the communities that form the site. If the intention is to decolonize the social practices of artist and architects, then a critical revision of the cognitive gaps and errors left open by traditional Western academic art and architecture pedagogy is needed. Only then can artists and architects propose practices of social sensibility and solidarity with the people that constitute the site and audience/user of their practices.

This starts with the *"experience error"* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) of the artist/architect's social practices, which is founded in the amalgam of social, political, cultural, and gender power dislocations between what Edward Said (1993) and Homi Bhabha (1994) called *the site of enunciation*. This is the site from where the speaker – the author – as the agent of epistemic authority, creates the narration. The authoritative knowledge of the narration is embedded in language and history, thus is in the history of modern capitalism built by privileging the sites of enunciation of the cultures, knowledge, and epistemologies produced by the Western developed countries (Spivak, 1988; Mignolo, 2000). Legitimate knowledge creation always responds to the speaker's – the author's – *"desires and needs as well as to*

institutional demands. Knowledge as such is always anchored in historical, economic and politically-driven projects" (Mignolo, 2001, p. 142).

The validation of epistemologies, Vandana Shiva (1993) argued, has been founded in the construction of modern science as the locus of epistemic authority and is complicit with the legitimizing Eurocentric knowledge as truth above all other knowledge coming from inferior cultures. Shiva posits that the addition of the "*scientific"* label creates a sense of *"sacredness or social immunity"* to the Western production system of valid knowledge. *"By elevating itself above society and other knowledge systems and by simultaneously excluding other knowledge systems from the domain of reliable and systematic knowledge, the dominant system creates its exclusive monopoly"* (Shiva, 1993, p. 4). The postcolonial feminist philosopher Sandra G. Harding (1986) described the sacrosanctity of Eurocentric scientific knowledge:

> *"Neither God nor tradition is privileged with the same credibility as scientific rationality in modern cultures [...] The project that science's sacredness makes taboo is the examination of science in just the ways any other institution or set of social practices can be examined"* (Harding, 1986, p. 30).

Shiva and Harding illustrated the site of enunciation of the author, legitimized by "Western science" but also legitimized by *geopolitical location* (Mignolo, 2009) and the proper *somatic norm* (Puwar, 2004; Segato, 2018b). Walter Mignolo adds to the creation of this epistemic subject of Western science and knowledge by arguing that, once upon a time, it was a de facto assumption between scholars that the knowing subject was neutral, *"transparent, disincorporated from the known and untouched by the geopolitical configuration of the world in which people are racially*

ranked and regions are racially configured" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 2). Hence, making "true" Western knowledge and values the universal condition of true knowledge.

Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga (1983) had argued against the neutrality of Western universalism and the geopolitics of power. They argued that we always speak from a particular location within a particular power structure (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1983). The *"experience error"* comes from the site of enunciation of the author. The author cannot escape from her own prejudicial perspective of class, gender, sexuality, racial hierarchies, spirituality, linguistics and geopolitics of the modern capitalist patriarchal world-system (Grosfoguel, 2008; Wallerstein, 2006). As Donna Haraways (1988) has stated, our knowledge is always situated. The site of situated knowledge is what Enrique Dussell (1977) referred to as the *"geopolitics of knowledge"*.

The *"experience error"* is thus located within these *"geopolitics of knowledge"*. First, our knowledge is always partial; second, our knowledge production is riddled with the prejudices of the author's social values; and third, it is dependent on the geopolitics and *body-political location* (Puwar, 2004) of the subject that speaks – the author. This is what Ramón Grosfoguel (2008) differentiates as the locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2008).

From the privileged perspective of epistemic authority embodied in the role of the artist/architect, the endeavour of their social practices situated in the site of the marginalized carries with it the disjuncture of epistemic injustices between the artist/architect and the object of their practices. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) posited

that being the objects of research inevitably perpetuates the colonial relation: *"being researched is synonymous with being colonized"* (Tuhiwai, 2012, p. 102).

The prejudices in social research, Charles Mills (1997) posited, start with colonialist assumptions that non-white persons are categorized in a manner that *"morally, epistemically and aesthetically establishes their ontological inferiority"* (Mills, 1997, p. 118). The darker the skin the lower the individual falls in the categories of epistemic inferiority of Western philosophy and science. How much of this prejudicial perspective still permeates the position of epistemic legitimacy assign to the subject of research?

Tuhiwai Smith argued that the image of the marginalized has been used as a metaphor in the social sciences and humanities to frame social inequality, oppression, and disenfranchisement within a socio-political construct of power. The metaphor of the marginalized, Tuhiwai Smith adds, has been used together with *"other similar concepts such as borders, boundaries, bridges, centre–periphery, and insider–outsider to demarcate people in spatial terms as well as in socio-economic, political and cultural terms"* (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 259). Tuhiwai Smith also presents that anthropology, when referring to the daily life of the marginalized, has recourse to utilize the term "liminal" to signify the interstices between formal society and informality where the marginalized dwell (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). The pedagogical theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings uses this term in this way: *"thus the work of the liminal perspective is to reveal the ways that dominant perspectives distort the realities of the other in an effort to maintain power relations that continue*

to disadvantage those who are locked out of the mainstream" (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Hence the site of the marginalized navigates between the formal and informal order of society. The margin is thus a site of the *borderlands* (Anzaldúa, 1987), an attractive site for academics, researchers, activists, and politicians as well as for the artist/architect. This site offers a variety of socio-political positions and ideological posturing that the author can exploit. bell hooks wrote about the margins as site for the radical possibility of *"choosing the margins"* as a site of belonging as much as a site of struggle and resistance (hooks, 1990). Hence, the site of the marginalized is the locus of confluence and disjuncture between many social discourses, from governmental populist political discourses, to third-sector agents' and institutions' discourses of social empowerment and community-building, to social activism from native as well as foreign agents. This site is fertile with fashionable participatory discourses of emancipatory politics, social empowerment, self-management, and ecological development, together with the discourses of resistance, localism, and culturalism, framed under the political umbrella of community.

The site of the marginalized thus becomes the site *par excellence* for epistemic extraction of indigenous forms of resistance – social, political, sexual, ecological, and economic – by all kinds of agents, from academia, government, third sector, and artists and architects.

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7.1. Epistemic practices.

The purpose of an epistemic practice is to create knowledge. Knowledge is a complex and dynamic social process that groups together all kinds of cognitive interactions by which humanity constructs and structures what is known about the world and beyond.

Miranda Fricker (2008) defines epistemic practices as ways, methods and behaviours that are socially articulated as the proper means to create *what we know.* The first stage of this knowledge construction is by the construction of a *testimonial narrative*. The trust that we bestow on such testimonial narratives is what legitimizes them as sources of knowledge. The authority of enunciation and site of the speaker reify trust as truth. Fricker argues that on our everyday epistemic practices, we convey knowledge to others first by telling them, and second by making sense of our own social experiences through this narrative (Fricker, 2007).

Gregory J. Kelly (2008) argues that epistemic practices are constituted as a particular set of social practices. Kelly defines social practices as a *"patterned set of actions, typically performed by members of a group based on common purposes and expectations, with shared cultural values, tools and meanings"* (Kelly, 2008, p. 99). Kelly continues to define epistemic practices as *"the specific ways members of a community propose, justify, evaluate, and legitimize knowledge claims within a disciplinary framework"* (ibid, p. 99).

The way that Kelly organized his definitions of social practice and epistemic practice as dependent – the former on *"common purposes"* and *"shared cultural values"* and the latter on *"members of a community"* and "*a disciplinary framework"*

– is agreeable only from the short-sighted perspective of universal values, pure-community and homogeneous culture. As we have seen before, such claims of homogeneity and consensus in the participation in a community and culture as a form of legitimization is fraud. The structures of knowledge creation within regimented *disciplinary frameworks*, as well as membership on a community and a culture, are all exclusionary social structures. The epistemic and hermeneutical limits of the structures that Kelly speaks of intrinsically limit what kind of knowledge can be accommodated in an inclusive process. The producing, evaluating and communicating of knowledge is therefore a hierarchical and exclusionary task of the process of power.

Kathryn Pyne Addelson (1993) argued that *"who makes knowledge makes a difference. Making knowledge is a political act"* (Addelson, 1993, p. 267). Thus, in Western capitalism's distribution of power, the patriarchal socio-economic and political organization of knowledge benefits by always supporting a discourse of male cognitive authority and epistemic superiority and dominance. Miranda Fricker (2007) addresses power as the *"socially situated capacity to control other's actions"* (Fricker, 2007, p. 4). Therefore, knowledge production keeps on supporting the classic disciplinary *"father knows best"* misogynist social-behaviour dictum.

Addelson asks: *"who made the public knowledge?"* (Addelson, 1993, p. 266). The legitimation by publicity of male-dominated epistemologies, and the fabrication of sedimented patriarchal epistemic practices using Western science and theology *"to conceal political purpose: to support a dominant elite (all men, or higher-class white men of developed nations)"* (Addelson, 1993, p. 267), has been the agenda of

traditional Euro-American philosophical traditions that place themselves as the true representatives of experienced reality (Pohlhaus, 2017).

In traditional philosophy, knowledge has always been defined as the locus of power. This locus has been located on the bodies of upper-class white men of developed nations (Puwar, 2004; Segato, 2018b). Knowledge has been the tool used to legitimize the domination of upper-class men over all others, including upper-class women, and from there on to all lower classes and subaltern others. The structuring of a social organization into a subordinate class system is crucial to the instrumentalization of knowledge as the "universal" tool of domination. Addelson posits that to undermine the hegemony of the dominant elites and the structures of epistemic legitimacy that support them, it is necessary to understand *"knowledge as a dynamic social process, not as a product to be justified, as traditional epistemologies have done"* (Addelson, 1993, p. 269).

Addelson hoped to dismantle the epistemic power dynamics and the structures of academic thinking that sustain the asymmetries of epistemic authority. Addelson searched for a change in the architecture of the institutions of academic knowledge and in the existing social organization of knowledge. Such changes, she found, needed to start by first changing our own practice (Addelson, 1993, p. 270), our own everyday living within the structures of power; and by understanding and challenging how we acquiesce the design of our everyday living.

An epistemology that captures the truth and provides a method that legitimates the knowledge-makers is an academic fallacy. No single interpretation of truth can claim correctness over all others. There isn't a single truth; there are as many truths

as people in a site. Paul B. Armstrong (1983), in his article "The Conflict of Interpretations and the Limits of Pluralism", quoted Nietzsche's contention that there is no truth but only an array of interpretations (Armstrong, 1983, p. 341). The point is not to find a universal solution. Instead, it is to recognize the multiplicity of ways to map an epistemology – one rooted in the social and dynamic organization of knowledge, aware of the *politics of interpretation* and *experience errors* embedded in the creation of any knowledge. The *experience error* might be impossible to steer away from; nevertheless, if we are keenly aware of its presence and effect in our practices, then we might be able to learn from it instead of being directed by its cognitive prejudicial perspective. Then, maybe, this conscious knowledge of our epistemic limitations would allow knowledge-makers to do their work sensibly and responsibly: taking into account the particular geopolitics and body-politics localized in the specific sites of intervention and thus avoiding theorizing scripted practices as one-size-fit-all solutions.

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7.1.1. Epistemic injustice.

Who has voice and who doesn't? This question is at the centre of the social and political structuring of epistemic injustice. It is based on the same asymmetry of power that Franz Fanon (2004) wrote about in 1961. Albert Memmi (1969), Edward Said (1993), Homi K. Bhabha (1994), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) all spoke about the epistemic and hermeneutical injustices of the *colonized* subject. All of them analysed and critiqued the situation of marginalization imposed on the practice of everyday life and identity consciousness of the colonized subjectivity.

The locus of the legitimization of colonization lays on the constructions of epistemic differences of subordination. These are the same social, cultural, gendered, and biological fabrications that support the superiority and domination of one people over another.

Epistemic injustice refers to those social practices of unfair treatment that relate to acknowledgment of knowledge, understanding, and participation in communicative social practices between people (Kidd, Medina, and Pohlhaus, 2017). Epistemic injustices can therefore be understood as epistemic in at least three senses. First, they wronged particular knowers as knowers, for example by suppressing or doubting a knower's testimony as truthful or accurate (Dotson, 2011) or by making it difficult for particular knowers to know what it is in their interest to know by denying the knower's agency (Fricker, 2007). Second, they cause epistemic dysfunction, for example by distorting understanding or hindering inquiry (Kidd, Medina, and Pohlhaus, 2017). And third, these epistemic injustices reveal their perverseness through their normative use in our academic and institutional epistemic practices. Thus a normative systematic pedagogy of epistemic injustices is accomplished.

Miranda Fricker writes about epistemic injustice (2008) as an instrumental part of what she calls a *dysfunction* in our epistemic practices. She identifies two forms of epistemic injustice. Fricker theorizes both as *"a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower"* (Fricker, 2008, p. 1). The first Fricker calls a *testimonial injustice*; and the second a *hermeneutical injustice*. Fricker explains that testimonial injustice happens *"when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word"* (Fricker, ibid). Hermeneutical injustice is defined by Fricker as occurring *"at a prior stage"*, before testimonial injustice

happens. Fricker positions this happening *"when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences"* (Fricker, ibid).

The foundation of testimonial injustice lies in what Fricker calls the *identity-prejudicial credibility deficit* (Fricker, 2007, p. 28). This is the social prejudice attached to people in their social identity and on their own assumptions of value of their own self. Thus, the pernicious influence of identity prejudice negatively affects the hearer's credibility judgement of the speaker (Fricker, 2007).

Identity power is the way in which society categorizes who has the epistemic credibility for speaking, and thus who has epistemic authority. In the structuring of identity power by the classic colonialist trifecta of power[39], history-language-knowledge, the subaltern categories of the populations thus remain as mere audiences and consumers to the exercise of knowledge creation, citizenship and democratic participation. The systematic instrumentalization of testimonial injustices as means for oppression and exclusion constitute the central case of how epistemic injustices belong to the political scheme of social justice.

The condition of epistemic injustice depends upon the collective conceptions of which social identities are at play. The ethical considerations in question result from who society deems epistemically responsible to take charge of their own subjectivity. Society periodically defines children, people under legal age, the

[39] Trifecta of power is the hegemonic production of history, language and knowledge by the dominant class of a society, or by the conquering state over its subjects. The narrative of history is written from the site of enunciation of the victorious in the language that they fabricated to place their knowledge as truth.

demented, the senile, and at one point in recent history women and people of colour as objects without epistemic capacity and hermeneutically lacking the means to properly understand the meaning and consequences of their own actions and the world around them (Grosz, 1993; Puwar, 2004). Therefore, their operations of social power in epistemic interactions are limited to stigmatized assumptions of epistemically disadvantaged subjects. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) uses the term *epistemic violence* for the claims to know the interests of subaltern persons that preclude the subaltern from formulating knowledge claims concerning their own interests and speaking for themselves (Spivak, 1988). Because the experiences of the subaltern, the colonized, and the marginalized are recognized only as *"subjugated knowledge"*, not a true form of knowledge. Michel Foucault (1980) described these as *"a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity"* (Foucault, 1980, p. 82).

This disjuncture of knowledge represents the site of the marginalized. Patricia Hill Collins describes as *"controlling images"* (2000) the pernicious stereotypes that constitute and maintain of the *identity-prejudicial credibility deficit* of the men and women who are situated as the silenced centre of epistemic violence. They are the illiterate peasantry, the tribal, the migrants, the lowest strata of the urban sub-proletariat (Spivak, 1988).

Therefore, it is an institutionalized systematic epistemic exclusion and silencing from the participation in the creation of people's own subjectivity. It is a form of colonizing power that embeds into its subjects a prescribed set of social behaviours

legitimized by the institutions of power as a sedimented practice of their own making. All of these are permitted under the guise of tradition and culture, thus perpetuating marginalization as a social phenomenon that is created and perpetuated by epistemic and hermeneutical injustices. Fricker calls marginalization a moral and political subordination and exclusion from some practice that would have value for the participant (Fricker, 2006). It is a mild way to represent the socio-economic and political disfranchising that marginalization causes. The subjects of marginalization are condemned to a life of exclusion and oppression without access to a non-prejudicial educational system and instrumental recourses for opportunities for a better life.

We should beware of thinking about education as a universal de facto liberating force. Paulo Freire, together with Henry Giroux and Roger Simon, warned us about schooling. They understood the traditional schooling of the state's institutions to be part of the production and legitimation of social forms and subjectivities, organized around sustaining the relations of power and meaning. Pedagogy can either enable or limit human capacities for self- and social empowerment (Freire, Giroux and Simon, 1989).

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7.1.2. Hermeneutical injustice.

Miranda Fricker (2006) described hermeneutical injustice as: *"the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to a structural prejudice in the collective hermeneutical resource"* (Fricker, 2006, p. 100). José Medina's (2017) description of the same

social phenomenon of hermeneutical injustice is: *"the phenomenon that occurs when the intelligibility of communicators is unfairly constrained or undermined, when their meaning-making capacities encounter unfair obstacles"* (Medina, 2017, p. 41. In both definitions the authors agree on the same cause for this problematic: a deficit of *collective hermeneutical resources*, and/or of *meaning-making capacities.* Both items appear to mean the same. Fricker in 2007 pinpointed this problem as a *"gap in collective hermeneutical resources"* (Fricker, 2006, p. 6). This gap is the empty space left without the shared tools of social interpretation and creation of meaning. These tools are as the emblematic publicized, access to emancipatory and non-discriminatory public free education, literacy, health services, housing rights, and just, fair working conditions and pay. The less emblematic and little publicized shared *tools of social interpretation* are the hidden patriarchal, racialized, genderized, classist, heteronormative tools for the *identity-prejudicial* social structure of modern capitalism. It is Fricker who argues that it is *"no accident that the cognitive disadvantage created by this gap impinges unequally on different social groups"* (Fricker, 2007, p. 6). Hence, the marginalized are also the *hermeneutically marginalized*, as they are left outside, again, as only spectators and consumers, and never participants of the creation of the social meanings that shape the world they live in.

Medina has called this effect "*epistemic death".* He described it as both testimonial and hermeneutic exclusion from the production of meaning and knowledge.

This effect renders the subject unable to be her own interpreter of her own social experience. This marginalized subject is thus unable to claim her own site of enunciation, of self-knowledge, and of her own narrative.

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7.2. Epistemic extractivism.

Artists' and architects' social practices have been fraught with problems when it comes to their interventions on the site of poor marginalized communities. These sites have become attractive for professional advancement in the career of mostly young and upcoming artists and architects since the early 90s. The seductiveness of adventure to work *on the field*, away from the traditional studio practices, together with the embodiment of becoming a *"revolutionary artist"* (Benjamin, 1968) or agent of social change, was hard to resist. Many artists and architects launched their professional careers on the back of the publicity that their works gained because of the site of poor marginalized communities. This includes artists like the duo Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla with their artworks and interventions in Lima, Perú (*Tiza* (1998)) and in Vieques, Puerto Rico (*Land Mark (Footprints)* (2001–2002); *Under Discussion* (2005); and *Returning a Sound* (2004)); Chemi Rosado-Seigo's artwork-intervention *La Perla Bowl* (2006); French artist Francis Allÿs, who moved a dune in Lima (*When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002)); architects such as Alejandro Aravena with his *'incremental housing'* public housing in Chile (*Villa Verde Housing* (2013)); architecture collective Arquitecture Expandida's community-architecture interventions in Bogotá, Colombia (2016). Their work has been both praised and criticized because of the site of intervention that they all choose to work

in: the poor marginalized communities. These artists and architects were praised when their work has been understood as helping the community fulfil a need for the betterment of their everyday life. They have been criticized when the same work has been regarded as opportunist and self-serving to the interest of the artist and architect before the needs of the community (Lippard, 1997; Bourriaud, 1998; Kester, 1995; Kwon, 2002; Bishop, 2006; Lima, 2013; Gómez-Barris, 2017, 2018).

Many art critics, historians and curators have engaged in paradoxical performances supporting their ideological ethics in terms of how they measured the effectiveness of socially engaged practices against the criticism of other critics. There have been publicized debates and antagonisms between critics and historians about what actually constitutes a proper social practice. The debate between British art historian and critic Claire Bishop (2006) and the art historian and critic Grant Kester (1995) is one that illustrates the subjective differences on what constitutes a proper social practice. Other debates between curators, historians and art critics abound, including from Nicolas Bourriaud (2002), Steward Martin (2007), and Nario Lima (2013); the ethics vs. the aesthetic merits of social practice are popular confrontations between well-known figures. The cultural critic Macarena Gómez-Barris (2017, 2018) has praised works that she deems environmentalist and decolonial artworks made and performed by indigenous artists from Ecuador to Chile. Gómez-Barris assigns these types of works and artists as creating a social practice from a decolonial gesture (2017, p. 110). Nevertheless, contradictions appear in her ideology of ethics when measuring these projects against other similar artworks made by different artists. Contradictions and paradoxes often appear and are expected in the subjective practice of art and architecture criticism.

Nevertheless, by the mid-90s this sort of social practice applied on the site of marginalized communities had become the new fashion for a so-called neo-conceptualism of vanguard practices. The public attention that these types of works generated became the political mouthpiece for art institutions, government social agencies and third-sector organizations to claim a renewed social purpose and function. Community-building, collaboration, participation, and democratic, emancipatory, and social engagement, became the keywords representing the social function of these institutions. Artists and architects thus became instrumentalized as social agents of change.

The traditional model of social practice refers to works, interventions, and actions of art and architecture in which the artist, the audience, and their interactions with one another are the medium. In this definition the artist/architect plays the role of the social catalyst, the protagonist that liberates the public from their subordinate condition of passive observer audience and consumer of the social spectacle (Debord, 1995).

The romantic image of the artist as catalyst that Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) cultivated in his notion of *relational aesthetics* revives some of the utopianism of Benjamin's *"revolutionary artist"* (Benjamin, 1968). This image is embedded in the artist as an agent of change in the whole of human relations and their social contexts (Bourriaud, 2002). Bourriaud argues that in such practice *"the artwork creates the social environment in which people come together to participate in a shared activity"* (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 113). Works ranged from menial actions such as artist Rirkrit Tiravanija cooking phad thai for an audience in Paula Allen Gallery in New York in 1990, to large-scale projects such as artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo building *La Perla*

Bowl in 2006 – a community pool/skateboard bowl in the marginalized community of La Perla, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Both these examples illustrate what became the modus operandi for art and architecture's social practices, as inspired by Bourriaud's definition: *"the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopia realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever scale chosen by the artist"* (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 113).

The international boom of these social practices for the last twenty years has left a large theoretical literature and many examples of in-site practice (Lacy, 1995; Miles, 1997; Finkelpearl, 2000; Kester, 2004; Miessen and Basar, 2006; Thompson, 2012; Phillips and Erdemci, 2012; Kupers, 2013; Kelley and Kester, 2017). In the rush of art and architecture to claim a new site of praxis, together with the academic and cultural institutions that legitimized such practices, many questions remained to be asked.

Some of these questions that remained to be constructed are about the commodification of art and architecture's social practices, and the role of the artist/architect as agent of social good or of epistemic extractivism.

These questions remain unanswered in the contested field of art and architecture's social function. The rhetorical discourse that was opened on art and architecture's social practices, social engagement, participatory practices, and social effect opened an *implementation gap*.

Stanley Cohen (1985) argued about the existence of what he called an *"implementation gap"* between rhetoric and reality. Cohen posited that the rhetoric itself was becoming the problem. (Cohen, 1985, p. 115). Hence, the problematic

facing the field of art's and architecture's social practices appears to be that most of the work remains settled in the rhetoric of a fashionable social-welfare discourse, and very little is being questioned in the praxis.

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7.2.1. The rhetoric of the implementation gap.

The positive publicity that art and architecture's works of social practice have received has become its own rhetoric of purpose. More attention has been placed on the productions of publications, and to the archive of these practices, than to a critical revision of their effects on the sites.

The publicity of emancipation, solidarity, participation, and socio-political empowerment of the social practices has remained only as illustrative proposals of intent for museum catalogues, art and architecture magazines and dossiers of theoretical literature. The actual fate of the praxis has remained murky in terms of whether or not these practices had their publicized effect or simply reproduced the same process of power asymmetries, epistemic authority, and knowledge and labour extractivism.

In the rush to be *'the good guy"*, the socially conscious artists and architects have unwittingly been used as agents for the same colonizing system of oppression and segregation that they were initially intended to challenge and change.

Artists' and architects' projects and interventions seen as *artivism* (Sandoval and Latorre, 2008) were appropriated by the state and private interests and became examples for strategies of art-washing, urban pacification and beautification under

the guise of urban renewal (Foster, 2013). Art and architecture ended up opening these sites to gentrification and expulsions (Deutsche and Ryan, 1984; Zukin, 1987).

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7.2.2. Epistemic prejudice/epistemic ignorance and excuse.

The artist/architect suffers from a *goodness prejudice*. This prejudice is identified as the condition where the artist/architect positions himself as an epistemic agent of authority under the illusion of a Roussonian discourse of *"the noble savage"* towards the marginalized communities with whom they are working. The *goodness prejudice* is a two-part phenomenon. First, it is the manifestation of the epistemic prejudice of the artist/architect's romantic paternalist assumption of the *poor as goodhearted*; the poor and marginalized that have been wronged, oppressed and exploited by the evil rich and powerful. Second, the artist/architect's unwittingly colonizer attitude of paternalist protectionism toward the poor, with the poor characterized as needy. The hermeneutical injustice of an a priori assumption is that the marginalized poor need help from outside agents, as they are unable to decipher the ways of modern society's institutions codes and languages. Thus, the artist/architect positions herself as interpreter, protector and saviour by being translator and interpreter of the knowledge of what should be a just and proper lifestyle for the marginalized poor. Here lies the locus of testimonial prejudice to which artists' and architects' social practices are cognitively blinded.

These processes happen because of the lacunas of epistemic ignorance in the design thinking of these projects. We have to be aware that ignorance is not a

simple lack. It is often constructed, maintained, and disseminated and is linked to issues of cognitive authority, doubt, trust, silencing, and uncertainty (Tuana, 2004).

Even well-meaning artists/architects who are creating works to stop epistemic and social injustices often unknowingly stumble into the paradox of epistemic injustice that Kristie Dotson had warned of: *"when addressing and identifying forms of epistemic oppression one needs to endeavour not to perpetuate epistemic oppression"* (Dotson, 2012a, p. 24). Epistemic oppression occurs in the works of social practice when the particular knowers – the community – are precluded from making an impact, not just *with* shared epistemic resources but also *on* shared epistemic resources. That means when the artist only envisages the community as audience, and as a *"participating contributor"*, as long as it doesn't diverge from the artist's/architect's program and tools.

Artists/architects are not immune to the prejudices of social identity affecting the people in the site, and thus they tend to doubt the context of their credibility. These situations where the artist/architect is acting as an epistemic agent of authority – researcher/expert/professional – in marginalized communities have the propensity not to fully trust the testimony of the speaker (the community). This testimonial distrust contributes to the *"experience error"* on the practice.

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7.3. A critical epistemic practice.

A critical epistemic practice is a way of creating and gathering knowledge while being very conscious of the methods of how this knowledge is intersectionally created and gathered.

This practice encompasses an assemblage of knowledge that should allow the artist/architect to gain a critical perspective of the social tectonics of the site from an intersectional position of self-criticism. A critical perspective means: to form an understanding of the social and political dynamics of a site and the individuals who dwell in this site, based upon the intersections of the intersubjective elements that constitute the social structures that allocate power on a particular social group over another. It is the understanding that all epistemologies are subject to a colonialist trifecta of power**.** Such are the trialectics of the production of history, language and knowledge by the hegemonic power.

Intersectionality should be used as a personal behavioural imperative that allows the artist/architect to examine and navigate the world around them with an awareness of their own prejudices and cognitive lacunas. This means that artists/architects need to create their own aesthetic of inclusion of heterogeneous social contexts and narratives (Collins, 2017; Crenshaw, 1991). By initially being conscious of her own prejudices – of race, gender, class, religion, spirituality, sexuality, and politics – the artist/architect can then self-critically take a critical perspective of the site's social tectonics in a dialectical relation with her own prejudices and not directed by them.

It is necessary to understand that in any critical understanding of the social field, no definitions can be taken as fixed. The social field is a transformative dynamic space where uncertainty is an inevitable part of any on-site practice. No single social praxis could claim to avoid errors and injustices, but a critical perspective can at least avoid repeating known errors and injustices. What a sensible and just praxis aims to do is to start localizing the interstices in the practice that are socially contested. The contestation lies when authoritative meanings, which are the established and sedimented definitions from the colonizer's universalist ethics and values, have been adopted as the status-quo in the social practice of the hegemonic authority – the state, academic institutions, and upper-class society. The challenges to these sedimented meanings and definitions arise from decolonial and indigenous experiences of intersubjective encounters; where meaning is elaborated collectively, rather than in the space of individual consumption (Bourriaud, 1998).

According to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), decolonization consists of the search for a liberating perspective aimed at facilitating self-understanding. Thus the need for art and architecture's social practices to be decolonized of the traditional institutionalized academic epistemic models of disciplinary knowledge based on Americo-European universalism.

The artist's/architect's social agency will always be handicapped if their understanding of the social tectonics of the site remains limited to the pedagogy of the traditional academic design thinking. Because of this, the social practices of art and architecture are riddled with prejudicial preconceptions of universalist ethics

and values that produce all kinds of epistemic injustices. The sites where these injustices are reproduced, most of the time unintentionally, are the sites where these definitions are constructed self-referentially to signify the site and legitimize the practice:

The site is assembled by:

–The community.

–The marginalized othered.

The practice is composed of:

–Social practice.

–The concept of participation.

–The social agency of the artist and architect.

The forum is constructed by:

–The museum, gallery, biennale, and other legitimate cultural institutions and academia.

–The audience of knowledgeable public of the educated classes.

–The market.

–The archive.

Within each of these sites, many definitions have been explored and challenged from an alternative decolonial perspective. Part of the process of self-criticism of the social practice rests in the capacity of the artist/architect to delink from the former authoritative meanings imposed upon their practices by traditional disciplinary pedagogy and the market.

Delinking means that you do not accept the options that are available to you; *"That another way is possible"* (Mignolo, 2001, p. 135).

A delinking from the traditional pedagogy of the disciplines of art and architecture is necessary in order to create a sensible social practice of epistemic justice, and radical solidarity. Radical solidarity is defined by José Medina (2013) as a departure from the proposals of radical democracy towards *"the direction of ethics and a politics of acknowledgement"* (Medina, 2013, p. 267). It is not an easy task and requires the artist/architect to acknowledge other possibilities that discern away from their own position of epistemic authority. This includes other ways of life and experiences distinctly different to theirs, even though these might go against their beliefs, ethics, and values, and also might be in conflict with their way of life. This is a tricky social enterprise that requires an openness to interactions *"indefinitely"* and with *"heterogeneous others"* (Medina, 2013). It also requires a critical position between dialogue, participation, and agency, a position that the artist/architect needs to navigate between Bakhtian's notions of dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981) and Mouffe's agonistic notions of participation (Mouffe, 2008).

The purpose of this *critical epistemic practice* is to guide the artist/architect to conduct their practices with a conscious *epistemic responsibility* (Medina, 2013). Thus permitting the artist/architect to deconstruct their own normative practices of art-making and architecture; hopefully being aware of the epistemic injustices in their design thinking and avoiding testimonial silencing and epistemic extractivism in their social practice. Epistemic extractivism is a baleful consequence of on-site practices of external social agents such as anthropologists, ethnographers, artists, architects, and tourists. The unwitting appropriations and naive impositions that these agents have on the life structures of these sites compound what Vandana Shiva (1993) called *"the fate of local knowledge systems"*. Shiva argued that with

the interference of external agents who bring authoritative epistemic systems that displace the local systems, these local knowledge systems throughout the *"third world"* are been conquered and displaced by *"the politics of disappearance"*. Which means that, from the perspective of the extractivist colonizer to the benign social agent in a quest to help the disadvantageous communities – according to their own prejudicial perspective error – both sides shared the epistemic ignorance of purposely or accidentally imposing their own politics of life as the better alternative for these *"disadvantageous communities"*, without first being open to a *"politics of debate and dialogue"* (Shiva, 1993).

Miranda Fricker asked a *contrapuntal* reading of power (Said, 1993). Fricker argued that *"wherever power is at work, we should be ready to ask who or what is controlling whom, and why"* (Fricker, 2007, p. 14).

The questions are not about how rights are adjudicated, or who speaks and who is denied to speak, Who is trusted and who is not, Who interprets, for whom and why. Who is the audience, who is the public and who gets to be the speaker. It is by now clear that the structures of power are established through the multiplicity of heterogeneous means and ways that globalized capitalism exerts on all of us. There are no mysteries left hidden in the *why* of the patriarchal hierarchical order of our everyday lives. What is left open is the opportunity to deconstruct the patriarchal authoritative design order of society. This task is possible only when we start with our own deconstruction and redesign of our own everyday life.

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7.3.1. Proactive participation.

Markus Miessen (2010) and Jeremy Till (2011) coincide in their critique on participation and participatory practices in art and architecture. They both argue that participation as an all-encompassing solution to issues of power asymmetries in design practices, together with concepts of collaboration, democracy, empowerment, and citizenship, are fraud – with misconceptions arising from the part of the author of the practice: the artist/architect. Both agree that *"consensus is an impossible term"* (Till, 2011, p. 1).

Till questions if any kind of participatory program could be instituted. Both Miessen and Till agree with Chantal Mouffe's (2005) agonistic pluralism. Mouffe believes that artistic practices could still contribute to an emancipatory project in resistance to capitalism's neoliberal policies. Nevertheless, all evidence to the contrary is apparent in the roles that art institutions and artists are happy to take into the art market's commanding dogma of professionalization, production, and commodification.

Till's question of the participatory practices is: *"What is missing is the voice or presence of the other side – of the insider, of the people, of the agonists"* (Till, 2011, p. 2). By the *agonists*, Till refers to Mouffe's agonistic model of participation (Mouffe, 2016), where the agonists are the people inhabiting the site.

Miessen presented at the end of his book *The Nightmare of Participation* (2010) in a single sentence a possible solution to the conflictual dialectics of participation. He posited that a *"mode of proactive participation"* could become *meaningful* if only three ingredients were presents: attitude, relevance, and responsibility (Miessen,

2010, p. 251). In his work *The Epistemology of Resistance* (2013), José Medina explores the paradigms of epistemic injustices that marginalized groups experience and the tactics of epistemic resistance they create. Medina noted that the absence of these same three elements was constitutive in the pervasiveness of systemic epistemic and hermeneutical institutionalized injustices. What Medina posited as resistance to these injustices is the development of a *socially sensible* practice (Medina, 2013, p. 297) of *radical solidarity* (Medina, 2013, p. 267), and *responsible agency* (Medina, 2013, p. 121).

Till (2011) returned to Miessen's very short theoretical contribution and expanded a bit more on these concepts. Miessen introduces *"three positions with which modes of proactive participation can become meaningful: attitude, relevance, responsibility"* (Miessen, 2010, p. 251).

Attitude: Till presents this concept as being constituted by two mutually dependent sides: generosity, and curiosity. Till states that the presence of both is required in the mindset of the social agent – the artist/architect – to enable *"openness to the issues and desires of others"* (Till, 2011, p. 3). Miessen frames this as an imperative to *"remain curious towards the specialized to the knowledge of others"* (Miessen, 2010, p. 196). Both are speaking about the necessity to create and access mutual knowledge, and thus they frame generosity as *"a willing acceptance"* of knowledge coming from both sides of the site; from the people who inhabit the site, and from the agents who intervene with the site. Curiosity is framed as the willingness of *"being surprised by that knowledge"* (Till, 2011, p. 4).

Relevance: What denotes the importance of any given project is framed within its own declared intent. Relevance is a highly relational definition. In the case of these social practices, they are tied to the forum of audience/users and to the publicity of the institutions that legitimate such projects. It could be, as Till argues, that the relevance of the project *"is only found when it is informed by the multiple voices of insiders"* (Till, 2011, p. 166). On the other hand, it might not have to do anything with the *voices of insiders*; instead, the project's relevance can be – as it often is – dependent only on the publicity that legitimates such project as valuable. The *voices of insiders*, together with participation, remains scripted scenography for a choreographed mission statement that fits into the institutional pseudo-populist discourse of community-building, horizontal practices, and participatory democracy.

Responsibility: The first question that arises about responsibility is: *To whom is it that we owe responsibility?* Zygmunt Bauman (1996) posits that *"the individual responsibility for the Other has failed"* (Bauman, 1996, p. 35). Till presents that the "Other" has become the *"standard term for the alternative and the forgotten"* (Till, 2011, p. 166). Till perdures the romanticism of social responsibility that architecture owes to *"the people"*. When he makes statements such as: "*The others that I refer to here are therefore not those on the fringes, but the multiple voices that go into the making, occupation and reception of the spatial environment. It is spatial agents' responsibility to act for and on behalf of these others"* (Till, 2011, p. 166). Till is appropriating from the system of architecture's professional ethics *"codes of conduct"*. As a system of expert knowledges, techniques, and functions, Till positions architecture as receptacle of epistemic authority and as morally obligated

to help the disfranchised and marginal. The problem here lies on the assumption of help. From the position of epistemic authority of the architect/spatial agent, Till refers to an almost moral obligation of the *spatial agent* to help. The question that remains to be answered is: *Who needs help, and from whom?* Hence, this is a slippery argument to define. It is very easy to fall into colonizing paternalist discourses of epistemic authority, where the expert – architect/artist/spatial agent – knows best.

Thus, the architect's/artist's/spatial agent's interventions appear more to be a sort of *mission civilisatrice* occupation for the good of the inhabitants of the site.

The marginalized in the systems of social practice are not explicitly denied a voice. Their role as speakers of their own experience is accepted into the program of the architect/artist/spatial agent. Nevertheless, it is not trusted as valuably equal to the expert, technical, professional knowledge that these agents bring with their professional practices. The role of the native speaker is silenced away from universal knowledge and relegated to the position of the vernacular; historically and culturally interesting for contextually framing the agent's practice. The vernacular is appreciated within the frame of tradition and local culture, but it is deemed ineffective, technically deficient, and anachronistic. The local vernacular knowledge and technique are thus judged by architect/artist/spatial agent as important from the side of culture, but inefficient to solve the modern technical problems of the marginalized.

The question remains, then: *Who has the moral aptitude, ethical rectitude, and technical proficiency to determine who needs to be helped?*

The determinant cornerstone of responsibility thus lies in whether or not the responsible subject is deemed to be a moral subject. Whether this subject has the capacity to judge itself and others depends on the epistemic authority that this subject has been bestow with. If this responsible subject, as Bauman posited, is "*trusted with the capacity of making moral judgments, and consequently considered to be moral subjects – that is, persons capable of bearing a moral responsibility, not just a legal one, for their deeds"* (Bauman, 1996, p. 2). Thus, the power asymmetries that determined the whole of our social relations seem to be inescabable. The problematic of responsibility thus coalesces into the same power dynamics of who has the agency of epistemic authority to determine the social positioning of others.

***

7.3.2. A *socially sensible* practice.

Medina argues that to develop a critical practice that consciously decides to break free of epistemic injustices, ignorance, silences and prejudices, it is necessary to include three constitutive concepts: social sensibility, radical solidarity, and responsible agency. These three concepts that Medina develops, if brought together with Miessen's and Till's concepts of attitude, responsibility and relevance, might be used as foundations for a critical epistemic practice.

Social sensibility: Starts with the social relationality of experience and the self. Medina argues that epistemic injustices arise from the different forms of *blindness* and what he calls *meta-blindness* that are related to this social relationality.

Social relationality comes to be a concept that Medina adapts from William James's 1909 ideas of *relationalism* (James, 1977). According to such, *"nothing can be understood in and by itself, but rather in relation to other things, in a network of relations"* (Medina, 2013, p. 298). To be social sensible thus entails to understand that the sense of self that we possess is dependent on the interactions and dependencies that constitute our sense of *one's life*. This awareness to the transformative qualities of the social composition of our identities, which are never fixed to stable truths, but instead are relational to the context of whether a narrative constitutes a truth to whom and during what temporal frame. The entanglement of all the possible variables that can constitute our personal identities is understood as *issues of diversity*. Thus, Medina posits, *"the others are essential to the self, for it is in networks of relations that individuals and groups are formed"* (Medina, ibid). It is interesting that the system of relationality that Medina posits following James bears relation to Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1928) general system theory, which he later extended (1951) to include biological systems. Von Bertalanffy described that *"a system is characterized by the interactions of its components and the nonlinearity of those interactions"* (Von Bertalanffy, 1972). Niklas Luhmann (2013) also argued on system theory, following Talcott Parson's (1951) argument that the social domain is a system that cannot only be reduced to biological or psychological elements (Gilgen, 2013, p. ix). Parson characterized a social system as *"a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation […] and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols"* (Parson, 1951, p. 5). Social sensibility thus depends on an awareness of the intersubjective, relational, interconnected,

dependent and ever-changing open and unfinished character of our social self and personal identity. Only then can we position ourselves in context to see other lives in fair judgement.

Radical solidarity: The simplest definition of a radical solidarity starts by acknowledging that other lives and other experiences, even the ones that are contrary and even antagonistic to ours, are present and are deserving of epistemic authority. Even though these other social imaginaries may come from persons that we deem epistemically inferior because of education, class, race, gender, politics or religious affiliations. The task in hand is as Medina posits: the process for achieving a radical solidarity starts by opening ourselves to a critical awareness of the limits of our own social imagination. As a social task of elucidating that in a pluralistic approach, there are other ways to imagine society, removed from our own vision. We should start by claiming responsibility for the things that we are able to imagine, as well as for our limitations in what we are able to envision (Medina, 2013, p. 267). Thus, radical solidarity, Medina posits, is *"the cultivation of an ever-expanding accountability and responsiveness to indefinitely many others, which is required by a resistant epistemic agency"* (Medina, 2013, p. 302).

Radical solidarity, Medina had argued, can only be attained in a *"radically pluralistic social sensibility"* that allows everyone to interact with agency without having to *"sacrifice our differences"* (Medina, 2013, p. 306).

Responsible agency: José Medina (2013) states that our own beliefs about the world can be formed and understood only in the context of what our own background of existential certainties allow us to support. Thus, the construction of

our place as responsible epistemic agents is limited to the immediate scope of our known experience. The responsibility that the artist/architect as an agent of their own social practices assumes is divided in two parts. First is the epistemic responsibility as qua knower and learner. Second is the ethical and political responsibility as qua agent (Medina, 2013). The balance between these two positions is a complex struggle within the artist/architect. To achieve a position of responsible agency in their own social practices the artist/architect has to explore within their own practice and persona their position as social epistemic agent.

Medina offers a few questions to start this process. He starts by asking if there are particular epistemic obligations to fulfil as a responsible agent. He continues with four questions to the agent to answer for herself:

> *–Does acting responsibly require that we know certain things?*
>
> *–Can our ignorance be, in some respects, not only an epistemic failure but also an ethical and political one?*
>
> *–Can our ignorance stand in the way of our being (or becoming) good people and good citizens?*
>
> *–Can our responsibility as subjects of knowledge have implications for our responsibility as ethical and political agents?* (Medina, 2013, p. 121).

These are the tools to explore for what could be a critical epistemic practice for art and architecture. Nevertheless, the plurality, temporality and dynamism of the social field and the artist's/architect's ontological diversities defies these thoughts towards

a critical epistemic practice as a formulaic fix-all toolbox. Thus, these thoughts remain as warnings and advice.

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8.0. Conclusions.

This chapter closes the thesis with a summary of the theoretical narrative of the development of a *critical epistemic practice* for art and architecture social-spatial practices. The research findings and contributions to practice are presented in a narrative through the contribution to knowledge, followed by a critical reflection on the thesis, the limitations of the research, and possibilities for further research. Throughout the thesis a question started to coalesce, what does a decolonized paradigm of socio-spatially engaged art and architecture practice look like?
The thesis assembled a *critical epistemic practice* as method and practice to decolonize the socio-spatial practices of artists and architects in the sites of poor marginalized communities living in informal settlements at the fringes of Latin American cities. The thesis introduces the artist and architect to a critical decolonial way of thinking about their place and function in society as socio-spatial agents. A *critical epistemic practice* is not only an instrument and method for a practice; it is also a means to expand and transform the artist and architect's social perspective and critical thinking.

A *critical epistemic practice* is based on the idea of a constant questioning of the way we do something – *practice* – and how we came to legitimize the way we are doing this practice – *patriarchal design.* It starts with deconstructing the ways we think about doing – *artist/architect as colonizer* – and follows with questioning how we are thinking about something as we are doing it – *critical epistemic practice.* Thus, it is a dynamic system and not a discipline structure of repetition that aims to achieve a static known goal – *the masterpiece*. It is a cumulative and iterative

practice of experiences that constructs an array of knowledge from many voices and different methodologies of working and *making – Practice as process.*

***

8.1. Compressed summary of the theoretical narrative.

The research continued by asking the question of why many socially engaged art and architecture projects seemed to disappear not long after the artists or architects had completed and left the site of the project. Many of these projects became abandoned or disused by the community where they were built, and now exist only in the many archives of art and architecture's literature concerning these socio-spatial practices.

The thesis commenced by positing that the *"crisis"* of art and architecture in the 21st century has resided in questions of legitimacy of purpose (Chapter 4) and has been more prominently emphasized by the lack of space for artists' and architects' professional practice. The limits of the abstract space of the art market, to the crowded social space of professional practice, emphasized the actual reduction of tangible geographical space as site for incoming artists' and architects' practices.

Artist Dan Graham was quoted by art critic Claire Bishop (2006) as having said that, "all artists are alike. They dream of doing something that's more social, more collaborative, and more real than art" (Dan Graham, quoted by Claire Bishop, 2006). Nowadays the artist still desires to be something more relevant in society. The problem is that young artists and architects cannot find a space in which to transcend the pigeonhole of their disciplines.

Social space might reproduce, transform, and constantly multiply; nevertheless, access for artists and architects to tangible geographical space have been truncated by privatization, legislation and jurisprudence of all nooks and crannies of space in Western developed cities. Public accessibility to space and the city remains within a tightly regulated scripted legislation of approved behaviours (Chapter 5). The formalization of a structured public life in the modern developed city has insured the stability of the status quo of a proper way of life. Nonetheless, this formalization and structuring of everyday life has left very small opportunities for artist and architects to explore beyond the boundaries of the Global North's modern legislated city. The lack of space in the modern city for new works, especially by young artists and architects, is further impinged by the mythology of permanence attributed to works of public art and architecture. The permanence and social value imbued to public artworks and architecture becomes the problem of permanent occupancy of space (Chapter 3). Also, new artworks and architecture are further deterred by the hermetic constitution of "image ideology" (Hadjinicolaou, 1974, p. 96) of globalized taste that the institutions of art and architecture cultivate and follow.

Image ideology constitutes a trend of formal and thematic elements that nowadays dictates which artworks and architecture are deemed valuable. This reproduction of conceptual and aesthetic trends has limited creative experimentation. Together with the lack of space, image ideology has required artists and architects to adopt a nomadic sense of practice, constantly migrating to where they can find an open space in which to develop their practices.

This "lack of space" has prompted Western artists and architects from developed

countries to explore the openness of informality that the underdeveloped countries can offer them as sites for their self-professed professional exiles (Chapter 5).

The move of artists and architects towards the site of informality in the undeveloped borderlands of cities in the Global South, together with an array of participatory and collaboratively practices of inclusion, eventually legitimized and appropriated into the *image ideology* of the institutions of art and architecture as a new art form of socially engaged art.

By now, artists and architects had positioned themselves within the popular contexts of social spatial engagement and participation, as socio-spatial agents of good and as radical *cultural workers* (Chapter 4). Artists and architects exploited this image of the artist/architect as socio-spatial agents, *radical cultural workers* to accentuate the publicity and marketability of their social projects and interventions. While many of their practices, projects and interventions that they devised ended up reproducing the same extractivist strategies of colonizing capitalism (Chapter 7). The two examples presented as failed projects in the case studies of the thesis, *Escalera como Protesis* (2013) and *La Casa del Viento* (2010), both by Arquitectura Expandida, reproduced the *colonialist attitude*[40] of the artist and architect embodied as expert agent of epistemic authority, who intervenes in a community to "solve" a perceived problem from the artist/architect's own *experience error*. However good their intentions, they reproduced the *epistemic errors* in their site analysis to convey a prejudicial perspective of the social tectonics involved in the two sites. Therefore,

[40] *Colonialist attitude*: see, 6.2. The socio-spatial agent (artist/architect) as colonizer. Maybe also add page numbers to all these! Or add page numbers in between the brackets where you refer to them in the text.

the design thinking for these projects was plagued from the start with misconceptions of *epistemic ignorance*[41]*,* scripted and tokenized participatory practices. (Schalk, 2018). Thus, it was not surprising that the community saw both projects as alien *parachuting devices*[42] brought into their communities for the self-interest of the architect.

***

The socially engaged works initially listed at the beginning of the thesis's research objectives (Chapter 1) informed the research's answers to the initial question coalesced by the thesis: what does a decolonized paradigm of socio-spatial engaged art and architecture practice look like? Followed by:

> 1-What are the cognitive gaps present in the design thinking and practices of many artists and architects working as socio-spatial agents in marginalized communities?
> 2-Why does a number of socio-spatial projects in marginalized communities tend to reproduce capitalism's colonizing extractivist practices?
> 3- What are the reasons behind the success and failure of socio-spatial projects?

At the outset of the research, these questions were thought to be addressing separate problems. Nevertheless, they proved to be part of a single recursive

[41] *Epistemic ignorance*: see, 7.2.2. Epistemic prejudice/epistemic ignorance and excuse.
[42] *Parachuting devices*: see, 6.7. On place-making device.

problem embedded in the traditional patriarchal design practice of artist and architects. The thesis argues the nexus of the problem is located in the colonialist attitude present in the social practices of artists and architects (Chapter 6).

These original questions are strung into a single narrative of epistemic errors present in patriarchal design thinking of the projects and interventions artists and architects create in the site of marginalized communities (Chapter 6). Therefore, it is clear that the correlation between projects that were abandoned and became disused is centred in the colonialist attitude. The projects that did last and are still in use by the community are correlated by the absence of colonialist attitude. Instead, these projects present a design practice intertwined with the communities' necessities and non-tokenized participation. The artists and architects who designed these projects were conscious of the community's social tectonics, history of disfranchisement, and social, economic, political, and epistemic marginalization (Chapter 5). This knowledge allowed the artists and architects to design from a perspective of solidarity and with awareness of their own epistemic prejudices and injustices (Chapter 6).

The correlation between failed projects lay in artists' and architects' utilization of parachuting practices (Chapter 6), imposing their own agency of epistemic and expert authority over the vernacular knowledge and techniques of the community; see *Escalera como Protesis*, and *La Casa del Viento* (Chapter 2). The projects deemed successful, because the community still uses them many years after the artists and architects have left, relied on an attitude of openness to the many voices of the community. The artists and architects designed these projects with the community in mind, and in partnership and co-operation with community members.

In the case of *La Perla Bowl* (2006), artist Chemi Rosado-Seigo had been a resident of the site, the marginalized community of La Perla, for a few years while he was a student at the nearby School of Visual Arts of Puerto Rico. He was known and well liked within the community; this allowed him an inside knowledge of the social relations within the community. Although the community initially saw his actions as the working of an eccentric young artist, they very soon took a liking to the project and even an attitude known in Puerto Rico as *"hay bendito"*, which roughly translates as an empathic sorrow towards him and his project. Thus, members of the community helped the artist by informaly participating in the construction of *La Perla Bowl*, donating their labour, materials, and even food to the artist and his collaborators. Helping the artist with the construction of *La Perla Bowl* is different than participating with the project. Meike Schalk has called this type of informal participation, "uninvited participation" (Schalk, et al, 2018). Helping is a free action taken by members of the community towards a person – the artist – whom they deemed in need of their help, both physical and epistemic. This is an assertive action of the epistemic authority these members of the community have over the site. The artist, by accepting and welcoming their help, recognized the community members' vernacular knowledge and techniques; furthermore, the artist's role as an agent of epistemic authority was not lost, and instead it was accommodated as an idiosyncrasy of the artist as an intermediary between the community and the art world. In conversations with Chemi Rosado-Seigo (2016), the artist alluded to his lack of a definitive plan and program when he started to build *La Perla Bowl* in 2006. Chemi retrospectively understood that the openness of his process and his humble attitude gave him a degree of credibility with the community. This, he points

out, was why the community allowed him to build and later on co-operated with him, helping to finish the project. Nowadays, not many users of *La Perla Bowl* know who Chemi is, although he continued for a few years to engage with other projects in La Perla, with *La Perla Portrait Kite Festival* and workshops in 2013 and 2015. Although Chemi's process and practice were open-ended, this actually became the key factor that permitted his practice to evolve by making (Ingold, 2013) throughout the years and that led him to finalize *La Perla Bowl*. Later it aspired that *La Perla Bowl* has taken in the life of La Perla's community; something which was almost unrecognizable in Chemi's initial aspirations in 2006. Nevertheless, this project remains as an example of an open practice where the artist unintentionally created a sensible practice in solidarity with the community during the process of making and building an artwork.

***

The other successful project, *El Potocine* (2016), a self-managed community movie theatre, relied on the close relation between *Ojo al Sancocho*, the local community organization, the community of Potocí, the neighbourhood where the project was built, and Arquitectura Expandida, the architecture collective *Ojo al Sancocho* asked to help design and build *El Potocine*.

Ojo al Sancocho acted as an intermediary, facilitating the close relationship between the members of Arquitectura Expandida and the community.

Arquitectura Expandida's members Belgian architect Harold Guyaux and Spanish architect Ana López Ortego had learned from their mistakes in previous failed projects of social architecture. Architect Harold Guyaux designed the failed

project/intervention *Escalera como Protesis* (2013) in La Perla, San Juan, Puerto Rico. They also designed and built *La Casa del Viento* (2010) (Chapter 5) in the district of San Cristobal in Bogotá, Colombia, which was burned down the same year as a result of a dispute between community members. Their previous experiences of failure gave Arquitectura Expandida an insight into their own problems in their practice.

During conversations that I had with Ana López Ortego and Harold Guyaux (2018), they pointed to the co-operation with and proximity to members of *Ojo al Sancocho* as having allowed them to be aware of the community needs, conflictual history with the government and internal politics. This knowledge, they said, was crucial in developing a design and a construction methodology that would integrate the co-operation of the surrounding community in the building process. Ana López Ortego argued that participation is a simulation and it needs a rupture with consensus in order to work. Thus, their methodology was based upon “tactical provocations”. Ana posited that the learning experiences with the communities in previous projects (Casa de los Vientos) where a form of creative resistance. From these experiences their methodology was developed including a participatory strategy of self-construction and self- territorial diagnostic to define the local social, material framework and needs.

Arquitectura Expandida created a design that utilized local materials and vernacular building techniques familiar to the community. The community co-operated with the construction of *El Potocine* because they saw it as belonging to their community. In this project it is again seen that participation was not a scripted part of the project’s design or construction program. It resulted instead out of the open sentiment of the

community to help build something they felt was their own.

The members of *Ojo al Sancocho,* Carolina Dorado and Angie Santiago saw this project as a legitimizing action of the community against the government's discourse of violence over informal settlements. They argued that the lack of resources in their community of Potoci actually generated and cemented social relations of cooperation and participation. Nevertheless, they pointed out that without a clear hierarchy, participation resulted in self-denial. Nonetheless they agree that the necessity to make visible the community through this project was a key part of the territorial resistance of the community against the government and land speculator's interests.

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8.2. Thesis contribution to knowledge.

The thesis started by asking, what does a decolonized paradigm of socio-spatial engaged art and architecture practice look like? Thus, stating the following research objectives:

1- To influence the design thinking of the socio-spatial agent (artists and architects) away from academic patriarchal design thinking and practices.

2- To contribute to decolonize the working paradigms of art and architecture socio-spatial practices.

3- To propose a critical epistemic practice of solidarity and a sensible, socially responsible socio-spatial practice in art and architecture.

Each of the thesis' objectives proposes a distinct contribution to practice and pedagogy in art and architectural education.

1-To influence the design thinking of the socio-spatial agent (artists and architects) away from academic patriarchal design thinking and practices.

An important contribution this thesis has presented is an inward look towards how artists and architects construct a perception of their socio-spatial practices and themselves as social agents. How we, as working artists and architects come to achieve agency over our public, and how this agency influences our perceptions and practices in the social realm.

The thesis presents a critique of the traditional idea in art and architecture academic thinking of the site as open space delinked from socio-political conflicts. The site is constituted by complex and intertwined social, cultural, and political constructions of the city, the community, informality and the marginalized as a social category of abjection, monstrosity, and extractivism (Chapter 5).

The thesis presents the flaw representations of the site in traditional patriarchal pedagogy as linked to the construction of the artist and architect's agency and social persona. From these problematics, relations and contested ideas, the thesis follows an intersectional approach to enquiry guided by decolonial feminism's socio-spatial critique of race, gender, and class to deconstruct the hegemonic patriarchal colonialist structure of academic patriarchal design thinking and

practices. Such is a necessary addition to socio-politically recontextualize art and architecture's socio-spatial practices away from the recursive epistemic errors, especially when intervening in the site of the marginalized (Chapter 7).

2-To contribute to decolonize the working paradigms of art and architecture socio-spatial practices.

The thesis argues the starting point of decolonization is to rethink epistemic agency (Mamdani, 2020). Also necessary is to be aware of what we distinguish as community knowledge; culture and traditions are framed by universalisms of Americo-European centric production of knowledge (Chapter 6).

The thesis posits that art and architecture's socio-spatial practice had migrated to the sites of the marginalized community in order to regain their social legitimacy (Chapter 3). Furthermore, it analysed the shortcomings of traditional scripted and tokenized forms of participation models and the extractive attitude of art and architecture's socio-spatial practices in marginalized communities in Latin American's cities by pointing towards the misconceptions and the cognitive gaps in the artists and architects' commodification of their own practices. (Chapter 4).

Following Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) position, the dominated cannot constitute or mobilize themselves as a group unless they are capable to question the categories of perception that articulate the social order. Such categories produced by the same order, impose their recognition and thus submission to such order. Whereby without the epistemic and hermeneutic tools to decolonized themselves, the reproduction of epistemic universalisms continues. This includes artist and architects, unable to challenge the hegemonical categories that dominate traditional

academic pedagogy and aesthetics, without a critical understanding of their methodologies, which will in return risks reproducing traditional patriarchal design in their practices.

The research proposed that a syncretic practice exists between the two disciplines of art and architecture. Such a syncretic relationship has helped art and architecture revive their socially engaged spatial practices. Nevertheless, this syncretism has also sunk both disciplines into reactionary colonialist and extractivist practices. These relationships have perpetuated asymmetric relations of power between the artist and architect as social agents and their public as audience and users. Whereby, the many authoritarian roles that the artist and architect embody in the site reduce the public and participation to tokenized definitions (Chapter 6). Nevertheless, the thesis proposes a space of self-reflection and self-criticism of the artists and architect's socio spatial practices and social positioning as social agents. Through these processes the artist and architect become aware of how their prejudicial perspective is created and how their social influence and power is used over their audience and public. The aim of the thesis is to contribute as an ethical and self-reflective framework that guides the artist and architect through these processes (Chapter 6).

3-To propose a critical epistemic practice of solidarity and a sensible, socially responsible socio-spatial practice in art and architecture.

The thesis presents the idea of a *critical epistemic practice* as its main contribution to knowledge (Chapter 7). This practice encompasses the gamut of ideas, attitudes and practices to decolonize the working paradigms of art and architecture practices

(Chapter 6). The thesis mapped the main epistemic errors that have contributed to a recursive ineffective socio-spatial practice of artists' and architects' projects and interventions in the sites of poor marginalized communities (Chapter 5).

The thesis proposes that a *critical epistemic practice* could be achieved following a practice of critical pedagogy and proactive participation (Chapter 7). The thesis argued that in many cases the cognitive gaps left open in traditional patriarchal design pedagogy have pushed the socio-spatial practices of artists and architects into a paradoxical situation in their research methodology. Many researchers start their investigation with a priori array of conclusions about their subjects. Thereby the research methodology leans towards corroborating the already known conclusions. The pioneer electronic music artist Suzanne Ciani (2021) said in an interview for a Netflix documentary, "We know what we are familiar with… we try to make sense of the universe based on what we already know." The sociologist Sharon Hays (1994) argued the same situation, "The choices that agents make are always within the realm of structurally provided possibilities." (Hays, 1994; 64). Thus are the limitations in traditional patriarchal design pedagogy outlined in the thesis as cognitive gaps (Chapter 1) and epistemic errors (Chapter 6)

The thesis contribution is in the form of a methodological framework for a pedagogical instrument outlining a methodology for critical modes of participation and intervention. The methodology argued in the thesis for socio-spatial practices has been used as theoretical and historical framework for the initial course of a new minor between The Fine Arts Department and the School of Architecture in the University of Puerto Rico. During the spring semester 2021, I designed, led and taught the course ARTE-ARQU 3110 Introduction to the relationships between Art,

Design and intervention contexts. The course presented other ways of "knowing and doing" (Grosz, 1999) following the thesis research. The course opened a space for critical discussions on practice and intervention towards creating alternatives to scripted and tokenized participatory practices (Schalk, 2018) towards constructing an *ethics of encounter* (Frichot, 2019). Furthermore, the critical discussions expanded towards ethically re-defining the artist's and architect's interventions away from colonialist and extractivist methods of reducing others instrumentally as "mere means" (Karatami, 2005), whereby these interventions will not only be forms of temporal "localized resistance" (Swyngedouw, 2016), but moreover move art and architecture practice towards transformative forms of practice.[43]

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8.3. Critical reflection on the thesis.

The thesis asked the question: What are the cognitive gaps present in the design thinking and practices of many artists and architects working as socio-spatial agents in marginalized communities? The research found the locus of the cognitive gaps present in socio-spatial practices in the traditional patriarchal pedagogy that keeps reproducing colonialist and extractivist attitudes in art and architectural design thinking.

The research explored the foundations for a decolonized paradigm of socio-spatially engaged art and architecture practice and how this praxis could be

[43] For more information and class syllabus see: https://alejandroquinteros.wordpress.com/2021/01/30/introduccion-a-las-relaciones-entre-el-arte-el-diseno-y-los-contextos-de-intervencion/)

achieved; through these processes the artist and the architect can liberate themselves from traditional misguided patriarchal design methodologies. The thesis' contribution to knowledge radiates beyond the instrumentation of a *critical epistemic practice* for decolonizing the individual working paradigm of artists' and architects' socio-spatial interventions. The research becomes more valuable as a theoretical foundation for a decolonizing pedagogy in design thinking and art-making and more crucially, in the overall formation of the artist and architect's social perspective. We might never be able to see through the *eyes of other*, but this should not be a reason to continue a closed self-reflexive, and self-congratulatory practice. Edward Said wrote, "no one writes simply for oneself. There is always an Other; and this Other willy-nilly turns interpretation into a social activity" (Said, 1983; 137). Therefore, it is not surprising that in the site of the social-spatial practices of art and architecture, interpretation, purpose, pedagogy and professional success remains the crux of contingency.

The site of their practices became a background for the publicity of their professional achievements. Markus Miessen (2010) noted that "Many practices in the art world rarely produce more than one-liners and postings, and nestle in the relative freedom and luxury of a superimposed happy-go-lucky bubble, in which participation has become nothing but an esoteric self-awareness program" (Miessen, 2010; 251). Hence, the socially engaged spatial practices of artists and architects in the site of marginalized communities in cities of the Global South had been exercises of epistemic ignorance, simultaneously being lauded by the institutions of art and architecture as revolutionary practices of selfless humanistic endeavour. The practices of artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla in Lima,

Perú – *Tiza* (1998) – and in Vieques, Puerto Rico – *Land Mark (footprints),"Under Discussion"* (2005), and *Returning a Sound*, (2004) – had been regarded as vanguard works of social practice by the institutions of art and the art market. Nevertheless they have also been regarded as opportunistic artworks that piggyback their social legitimacy on the protests already happening in these places. The artwork *Tiza* was an intervention by the artists placing oversized metre-long chalk bars on the street outside the Peruvian Municipal Palace of Lima during a workers protest. The aim was that protesters would use them to write their grievances against the government. The theatrics of the oversized chalk were attractive for the photo documentation of the work. Nevertheless, the workers protesting could not use them whole to write; they had to break them into small pieces.

Allora and Calzadilla's other works in the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico were during the protests (1999–2003) to evict the US navy from their base in Vieques. The struggle against the US navy had its origins in the early 70s. Activists and community members who had led the struggle since the 70s were leading the protests in 1999, fighting the appropriation and use of one third of the island as the navy's bombing range. Allora and Calzadilla publicized their presence and participation in the protests. They made various artworks in Vieques, and contextualized their practice within the social and political struggle of the protests. Their artworks became known to the people of Vieques and to the people who participated in the protests only later, through newspaper articles and online exhibition catalogues.

The artist Francis Alÿs's work *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002) took place in the

informal settlements outside Lima, Perú. This artwork has been extensively publicized as a socially engaged work. Nonetheless the artwork did not include any meaningful participation or engagement with the community beyond Alÿs' use of the community as free labour and social backdrop. The art world's celebrated this work as a *social catalyst* (Bourriaud, 2002) and as an example of art's function as an instrument for social change.

The principal impact of these practices has been the revitalization and legitimization of the Western institutions of art: museums, biennials, art fairs, academia, and the art market. Beyond that, to think that these works had any meaningful impact in the communities where they took place is naïve. I had the opportunity to be present and participant of the demonstrations that took place in Vieques from 1999 to 2003. During this time, the work of Allora and Calzadilla was unknown to the people in Vieques. It was not until a few years later that their work became known in the island by newspaper articles of their exhibition in New York's MOMA. I had a similar experience when I went searching in Lima, Perú for people who had participated in or remembered Francis Alÿs's work. Even though it was by then 10 years after the project, I could not find anybody who knew of it. These experiences made me think of the word *intervention*, which is often used to describe these works of socio-spatial practice that some artists and architects do. *Intervention* describes an action that it is deemed necessary to fix, resolve or heal a negative situation, like an illness or addiction. *Intervention* denotes a quick action and a prompt withdraw. Thus, it seems proper to call the practices from these artists' *interventions*; although they did not leave any lasting effect on the site, these works did contribute to the long list of literature produced to reify art's socially engaged spatial practices as

colonizing instruments for epistemic extractivism. (Chapter 6).

The question that remains is whether these social-spatial practices and the temporal nature of their social engagement remain a revolutionary practice of selfless humanistic idealism, or should be seen as an opportunistic endeavour of professional gain.

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The political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2007) raised the question: “Can artistic practices still play a critical role in a society where the difference between art and advertising has become blurred and where artists and cultural workers have become a necessary part of capitalist production?” (Mouffe, 2006; 1). The direct and simple answer is no. If we step away from our “experience error” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and take a bit of “critical distance” (Jameson, 1991), it is clear that art has never played a critical role for the whole of society beyond the small circles of culture and bourgeois legitimizing spectacle for a trained audience.

Architecture on the other hand appears to have had a larger perceptual role in society. Architecture has been tasked since antiquity with the behavioural design of society through the design of the structures in which we dwell, and the city spaces where we conduct our everyday life. The first question to contrapuntally (Said, 1993) clarify is of whose society was Chantal Mouffe speaking. Society is not a single homogenous block; it is composed of many *“worlds”* (Lugones, 1987). Feminist philosopher María Lugones spoke of *“traveling to other people’s worlds”* (Lugones, 1987, p. 18), as an action of self-awareness to our own small, localized and prejudicial perception of our society as a unitary form, and the world around us. Our

own societies are composed of a multiplicity and plurality of “worlds”, divided and inhabited by distinct peoples we have come to call the “others”. The ones that have a different way of life from ourselves, but also a distinct affective, emotional and ideological construction of what the world is from their own perspective –*“from a world their own”* (Lugones, 1987). Hence, when the social purposes and functions of art and architecture are stated, it should first be clearly stated who the audience, user, and receptor of these practices are.

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Art and architecture as disciplines are posteriori externalizations that legitimize with their practices the society of the political ruling power of the day. Neither art nor architecture has a protagonist role in determining the fundamental relationships and hierarchies of social and political reproduction that structure the socio-economic and political development of a society. Both disciplines only reproduce the authoritative signs of epistemic legitimacy – museums, court houses, mansions, skyscrapers, paintings, sculpture, and others – but not the social and political meaning of the signs.

Art remains the perennial Barbara Kruger euphemism of the “*garnish”* on the “*slab of meat”* of architecture. If art is the “*garnish”* that adorns the legitimacy of the bourgeois ruling class, as the elite taste and the locus of epistemic authority, then architecture might be the main dish, representing the unmistakably triumphant crown bestowed upon the advanced society of epistemic superiority. Nevertheless, in this metaphor, the kitchen should be represented by society, thus neither the garnish nor the main dish has any long-term transformative role to play there. Art

and architecture do have their moments when the ruling class of society – political, economic, and cultural hegemony – calls on them to perform as reflexive symbols of their achievements.

The largest percentage of the population does not belong to the privileged centre of the educated middle and upper classes, for them art and architecture are foreign artefacts. Although the poor and disfranchised populations do not have access to the formal epistemic tools of education and identity empowerment, that will allow them the critical empowerment for a judgement of taste and purpose. The epistemic authorities of culture repeatedly tell them that these artefacts are important. Thus, art and architecture mostly continue to act as instruments in the accumulation of social capital to reaffirm the epistemic superiority of the upper classes.

Periodically, art is used as backdrops to temporary fulfil romantic exaltations of revolution, which have in turn been appropriated into the social reproduction of the same system.

Art and architecture have always been reflexive practices, which are more or less detached from the everyday life of the common people. Hence, the question should not be: *Does art still play a critical role in a society?* The question to address instead should be: *To what part of society is art still relevant?* The answer then would be: *Art remains instrumental for a particular section of educated society.* This question should be followed by another: *Can art still claim to be relevant beyond the creed of art's autonomy of art for art's sake?*

Neither art nor architecture can claim the romanticized "autonomy" of a delinked subject away from societies' prejudices, desires and fashions. Art and architecture,

the artist and architect, are inevitably intertwined with politics, ecology and philosophy where action and theory become inseparable from each other. It is from the entanglement of knowledge and actions that the questioning of the purpose of art and architecture's social-spatial practices should be started.

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Art and architecture are clear commodities as object and as epistemological forces. Artists, architects, museums, and art institutions have all embraced the self-representation of *"cultural-workers",* naively joining into the discourse of the *culture industry* (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947). Adorno by 1936 had already stated his suspicion in letters to Walter Benjamin of what he saw *High Art* as well as *"industrially produced consumer art"* that *"bear the stigma of capitalism"*. The uncritical embrace of art institutions, artists and architects to the image of cultural workers as painted by the neoliberal discourse of labour has legitimized the instrumental commodification of their practices into the service of a market economy where precariousness is the permanent condition that speaks about the separation between work and labour (Szaniecki and Coco, 2015). Thus condemning the artists' and architects' practices to the precariat condition of producers of artefacts of consumption.

The apparent lack of *"critical distance"* (Jameson, 1991) displayed by artists, architects and institutions has contributed to the colonization of all things considered the domain of art – architecture falls into this domain – into the global capitalism's commodities discourse. The baleful consequence of impeding a critical positioning of art outside its dependency on commodification as market

legitimization has resulted into the indifference to differentiate between art making, advertisement, and other forms of capitalist production. Clearly art and advertisement belong together as products of the same culture industry. Mouffe argued “art has been subsumed by the aesthetics of biopolitical capitalism and autonomous production is no longer possible” (Mouffe, 2013; 92).

Without the ability for critical distancing, it is not possible to have an overview of these displacements. How art has slipped quietly into the self-congratulatory complacency of thinking itself as countercultural or cultural resistance by *“inclusive”* discourses of race, class and gender into its aesthetic paradigms, while they themselves have been “secretly disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it” (Jameson, 1991; 49). Thus, art and also architecture remain in the comfort zone of their own cognitive trap of delusional effective social contribution.

Artist Jeanne van Heeswijk (2012) argued that art could be an epistemological force, with the potential to transcend mere representation or “fashionably uncritical cliché of art as knowledge” (Van Heeswijk, 2012; 78). Van Heeswijk posited that art could be instrumental in creating “new spaces of transformation”. The feminist social activist bell hooks called these *spaces of counter-hegemonic cultural practice* (hooks, 1991). These constitute *new spaces of resistance*, to dominant discourses of power (Keith and Pile, 1993). Nevertheless, before the artist and architect can claim this responsibility, Van Heeswijk exhorts, “the artist has to decide whom they serve” (Van Heeswijk, 2012). The “*service”* of artist and architects has always been a matter of critical question. This matter is concerned with issues of autonomy and the self-serving reflexive practice of the artist and architect.

What it is clear is that artists and architects are not needed in the sites of the marginalized poor. The story that has been fabricated from within the imaginaries of art and architecture, where the needs of the marginalized poor correspond more to the needs of artist and architects, whereby these communities serve as sites for their practices, rather than corresponding to the needs these communities have for expert legal guidance, technical infrastructure, education and medical facilities or political validation of their way of living.

This story is enshrined in art and architecture's disciplinary epistemic ignorance, devaluation, and identity denial of the vernacular forms of architecture, informal service infrastructure and local art forms that have existed within these communities well before any artist or architect arrived.

For any project that had a consequential impact on the community where it was constructed, there have been countless others that remain in existence only in the pages of the official archive of museums, galleries and online sites of art and architecture social practices.

Art and architecture's social practices in the sites of marginalized communities remain palliative practices, which serve to reify the reflexive nature of these two disciplines, rather than having any long-lasting social effect on the people who continue to live in these sites.

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8.3.1 Limitations and further research.

The research closely centred on the effects, relationships and practices that artists and architects' socio-spatial practices have had when applied in the sites of poor marginalized communities in Latin American cities. The thesis limited the case analysis to only two sites, in San Juan, Puerto Rico and in Bogotá, Colombia. Although the thesis was also informed by the author's interactions with many other works in Lima, Perú, the time frame and context of the thesis did not allow for a more expansive look at these other projects.

Further research could be contextualized into a more wide-ranging study of the effects of socio-spatial practices in Latin America on local artists and architects and on the pedagogy of future artists and architects in Latin America.

There is still an open field of theory and practice to be study in context of Latin America and the particularities of new homegrown socio-spatial practices.

It was evident in this research that the influence of foreign artists and architects in the sites of marginalized communities had had the effect of inspiring local practices that further and more incisively developed these projects into practices of socio-political resistance in these communities. These new practices included elements that are present only in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of these informal settlements, and are not openly evident for artist and architects coming from outside. Occupation and citizenship occupied the central axis in these new homegrown socio-spatial practices of resistance. Alternative forms of occupation and citizenship frame the temporality of informality and exclusion in the lives of the marginalized community. Therefore, it is not surprising that a homegrown practice

would pivot around this central axis that defines all other aspects of their social experience. The prospect of expulsion looms ever present in the everyday-life experience of the marginalized. Thus, these new practices explore novel tactics of insurgent occupation and insurgent citizenship (Holsten, 1998; Schalk, 2018) that only the local, native inhabitant of abject poverty and marginalization can somatize. Hence, maybe this is a closed proposition to foreign actors, and can only be attained by a native researcher.

It must be clear that any research into these communities must work towards an ethics of encounter (Frichot, 2019), where the positionality of the socially engaged spatial agent has to be disclosed as part of a situated responsibility (Altés Arlandis, 2018). Nonetheless, the turn towards colonialism and extractivism remains prevalent in these socio-spatial practices. The transnational postcolonial feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohandy (1984) has warned us that colonization has come to denote certain modes of appropriation and codification of knowledge, especially in the case of marginalized and oppressed groups, particularly for women in the Global South. Colonialism has been used by “feminist women of color in the U.S. to describe the appropriation of their experiences and struggles by hegemonic white women's movement.” (Mohandy, 1984; 333). Thus, we must remain vigilant that our encounters with other groups should remain free of professional opportunism. Rather, we should aim towards becoming “transformative learning experiences.” (Altés Arlandis, 2018; 277).

The developing of local socio-spatial practices is a phenomenon in process. Many of them are coming from native informal artists and architects. Their informality exists in the sense that they are not schooled in the traditional academy, but are

instead coming from autodidactic imperatives from people who do not have access to the epistemic tools of higher education. Nevertheless, in countries such as Colombia, Perú, Chile, and Argentina new spaces of knowledge are continuously being created outside the traditional academy of universities and institutes. This is where further research into local tactics for socio-spatial practices of resistance and occupation should be centred.

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